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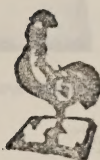




*The*  
COMMODORE'S  
STORY

*By*  
RALPH MIDDLETON MUNROE  
*and*  
VINCENT GILPIN

*Illustrated*



IVES WASHBURN · PUBLISHER

1930

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STORY

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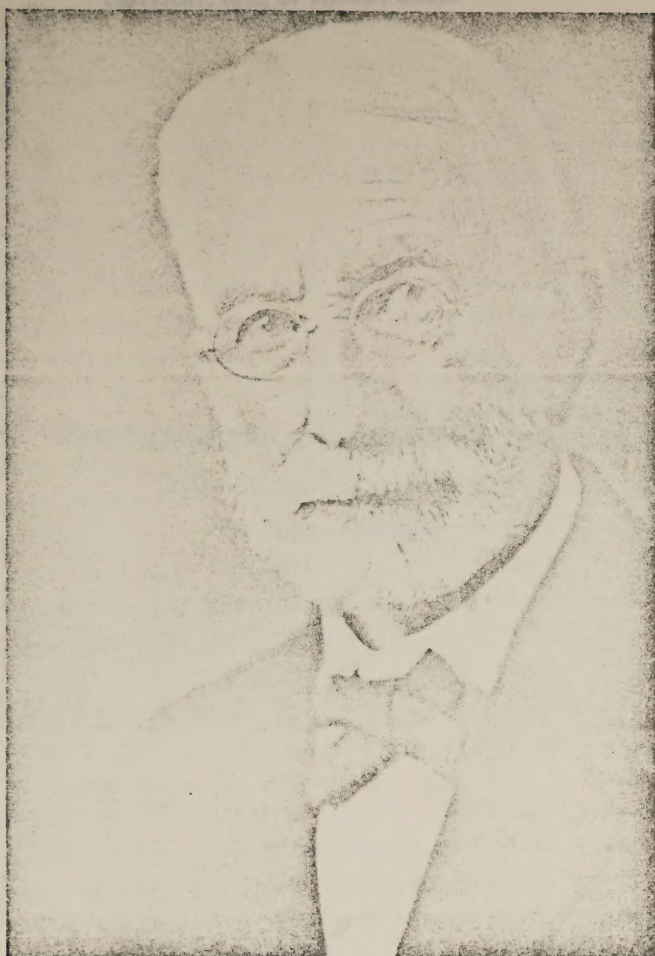


THE WASHINGTON PUBLISHER

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Courtesy of *Yachting*

RALPH MIDDLETON MUNROE

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*To*  
THE STEADFAST IN LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR





## PREFACE

TO ANYONE who has spent much time in southern Florida, or on the blue waters of Biscayne Bay stretching southward from Miami inside the keys which fringe the low-lying coast, Ralph M. Munroe, endearingly known as "The Commodore," needs no introduction in the preface of a book bearing his signature. A pioneer, who first felt the charm of that palm and pine-fringed coast over fifty years ago, when that end of the peninsula was as inaccessible as the western plateau in the days of the covered wagon, he soon succumbed to the lure of the country and became one of its early settlers, building a home in what was then practically a wilderness, and is now within the boundaries of a large city. In the development of the lower east coast of Florida he played a quiet but important part. To those who know him it is easy to believe that his personality, his friendliness, and his good will were in a measure as responsible for attracting those who early followed his lead in settling the coast near the mouth of the Miami River, as were the climate and the other features which have made the shores of Biscayne Bay irresistible to many.

Those early days in Florida were filled with adventure, with hard work, and sometimes with long periods of isolation, and as the sea and boats were the only means of communication, one had need to be a skilful sailor to make the most of what Florida had to offer. And Ralph Munroe was that. He was a thorough seaman before he went to Biscayne Bay, but the waters and the life there gave him an opportunity to develop his love of boats, and to turn his talents to the designing of a type of sailing craft that was peculiarly suited to shoal water, and yet was so seaworthy as to be able to make the long runs up and





down the coast outside, and to stand up in the rough waters of the Gulf Stream. There are but few yachtsmen living today who have done as much for the sport, or who have as deep a love and understanding of boats, as Commodore Munroe.

It was in 1877 that Ralph Munroe first visited Florida, going by a sailing vessel to Key West, and thence by small coasting sloop to Biscayne Bay, which he explored thoroughly, as well as the whole southeast coast. He had begun life as a mechanical engineer in New York, but even then all his spare time was devoted to the water, and after a second voyage to Florida in 1881, his interests centered in this remote, almost unknown region.

Coconut Grove has been his home since 1885, so Commodore Munroe's story includes, in great part, that of southeastern Florida as well. He was the predecessor of the great multitude of home-seekers which has poured into that region in the last forty years, and he was the "guide, philosopher and friend" of not a few of them. No one has been a more devoted lover and supporter of southern Florida than he, and none has given to its many problems such a combination of keen intelligence, broad education and full experience. His labors in the development of the east coast were varied and unceasing. They covered many lines — business, the fisheries, surveys and natural history, the salvaging of vessels stranded on the then poorly lighted keys, and the development of communication by the only highway, the sea. Many were the boats he designed and built in those early days, and all of them were good boats, particularly suited to the work they had to do, and combining ability, beauty, comfort and speed.

There is much in the Commodore's story of especial interest to yachtsmen, by which term is meant the real sailor. Seaworthiness and safety as essential factors in a yacht called forth much heated discussion among yachtsmen half a century ago, and it remained for Ralph M.



Munroe to find a satisfactory solution in a yacht of moderate displacement and limited draft, rather than through the great displacement, deep draft and heavy ballast of the keel cutter.

His personal tastes have always centered irresistibly on the sea. Blue water, either beneath him or within stone's-throw, has been an essential of his daily life. It was he who founded the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, of which he was Commodore for twenty-three years, and this accounts for the title "Commodore," by which he is generally known, and which is primarily a title of affection, less formal and more intimate than "Mr. Munroe."

These reminiscences of a long, useful and interesting life have grown from a simple note-book which Commodore Munroe started originally for the benefit of his children, in order that the pioneer days of the country he loved and which he did so much to develop should not be forgotten. But the story had too much of interest to those who now make southern Florida their home, and to yachtsmen who have sailed the waters off its coast, to be left in its original form, so, in response to the urging of many friends, it has been prepared for publication. With much of Mr. Munroe's life, Vincent Gilpin was familiar, through a friendship and companionship, afloat and ashore, of forty years' standing, and no one is better fitted to add the closing chapters that bring the story down to the present time.

In one great and lovable quality, Commodore Munroe stands forth above other men — in his genius for friendship. Never was keener eye than his for human character, or greater appreciation of the good in every man, of whatever class or condition. Enough for him that a man's eye is clear and straight; then, be he beachcomber or millionaire, he is worth cultivating. And he is never forgotten; in all the ramifications of a life-time of ever-widening acquaintanceship, scarce a detail of personal character-





istics, shared adventures or mutual relationships has escaped the Commodore's keen memory.

Of positive views, never afraid to support his beliefs against all comers with the courage and determination of centuries of fighting Scots forebears, and unalterably opposed to oppression or injustice, he naturally has opponents, and even some enemies. But with him no opposition or controversy is permanent. Eventually understanding grows, and leads to friendship. And what counts more than anything else to those who know him are the grasp of his hand, the light of his smile, and the twinkling good will which shines from his eye. Whatever he may have *done*, he *is* a wonderful friend; while we admire his accomplishments, we *love him!*

HERBERT L. STONE.

June, 1930.



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PART I  
*By* RALPH M. MUNROE



## I

### CHILDHOOD ON STATEN ISLAND

ABOUT 1848 Father settled on 22nd Street near Fourth Avenue, in New York — a suburban neighborhood then, with farms beyond — and there we children were born, Ralph, Minnie and Ellen. I have but few memories of this home — a champagne bottle with gorgeous label which was long treasured, Peter Goelet's peacocks behind the iron fence on Broadway, a spring-driven toy locomotive, and guava jelly brought from Cuba by Uncle William.

In these summers we spent some months at Penatiquid on Great South Bay (afterward called Bayshore), traveling by rail and stage. Here I caught a fine mess of fish on a pole poked out of the window, but afterward found that Daddy had hooked them on! We also went to New Rochelle, and my first sail was to Glen Cove in an open boat with a rope tied about my waist, much to my disgust. The family made many friends here. One neighbor was a Concord boy, Frederick Hudson, of the New York "Herald," who remained a kind friend of mine until his death in the seventies. As an editor he had countless tickets of admission, and being without family and too busy to go himself, he gave the best of these to us; so for many years I had rare opportunities, such as season tickets for the best seats at the Academy of Music. Mr. Hudson created the shipping news department of the "Herald." It was he who planned the system of fast vessels, which spoke the packet-ships many miles outside Sandy Hook, and outsailed them with the news. Later they cruised halfway across the ocean, and when the land-telegraph was established, wired their news from the eastern terminals of that service. It is said that Mr.





Hudson had on his tongue's tip the name, captain, owner and consignee of every vessel trading regularly to New York.

One trivial incident of this period had far-reaching results. Father had left his watch for cleaning at the shop of Ball, Tompkins and Black (later Black, Starr and Frost). After calling for it several times he lost patience and berated the place, and they tried to appease him by saying that such a timepiece, by Cooper of London, was given only to the best of workmen, who were scarce. This reminded Father of his cousin Eben, a watchmaker anxious for a New York opening; he was the son of Daniel Munroe, the Concord clockmaker.<sup>1</sup> He came on, and worked so well for the firm that on its reorganization in 1861 he became a member. He married a Brinkerhoff, who brought him a considerable dower, and had one son, Elbert B., who was taken into the firm in 1865. Elbert inherited one fortune, got another with his wife, and having no heirs, gave large sums to various benevolent objects, including Princeton and Yale. This long story turned on Father's outspoken resentment of delay. Had he been meek and mild (which he was far from!) where would the country watchmaker or his issue be? We are largely creatures of circumstance.

This watch also figured in an odd coincidence. It had been taken by Father as security for a loan to a stranger, and never redeemed. On Uncle William's death, years later, Father inherited his watch, bought in London. I was struck by the similarity of the cases, and found that Uncle William's was also a Cooper, and *next in serial number* to Father's.

In 1854 the family decided on more rural surroundings, made a number of trips to Staten Island on the old "Hunchback," or *Josephine*, house-hunting, and settled on the Gilpin cottage on Townsend Avenue, Clifton, where we spent two years. Father's office was at 32 Pine

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I, "The Munroe Family," page 366.



Street, and close by in Maiden Lane was a toy shop which displayed a beautiful tin and cast-iron locomotive two and a half feet long, on which I centered my longings. Months afterward it came home, and the way in which the garden at the Gilpin cottage was turned into vast railroad developments was a caution!

About 1856 we went to the Asaph Stone place on the Old Town Road — one of the oldest roads in America, used long before New York was thought of. It had forty acres, running from the hills to the salt marshes and the beach, across New Creek, and I had the time of my life fishing in the Creek, rafting on the ponds, bathing in the surf, nutting and berrying. I remember my first long trousers (against mosquitoes) and a lavish display of fireworks on the "Fourth"; such a time we had next day hunting rocket-sticks!

Not far away was a very old house owned and occupied for a short time by the McFarlanes, old friends of my parents' in London; one of the daughters, Flora, was a prominent pioneer of Coconut Grove.

One of the vivid memories of this period is the songs Father sang to me, usually toward bedtime, amid eager delight, and fervent pleas for "More! More!" English ballads and children's verses, they were, always jolly, and frequently lengthened by extempore stanzas dealing with the events of the day. I can still hear the long-drawn cadences of the "Huntsman's Reveille":

Rouse, rouse from your slumbers! To hunting give place,

For the Huntsman is winding his horn!

The hounds are all ready, all keen for the chase,

And the Huntsman is winding his horn. . . .

The Huntsman . . . is winding . . . his . . . horn!

Then there was the "Three Jovial Huntsmen:"

It's of three jovial huntsmen, an' a-huntin' they did go;

An' they hunted an' they hollo'ed an' they blew their horns also,

Look ye there!





An' one said "Mind your e'en an' keep your noses reet i'the wind,  
An' then by scent or seet we'll leet o' suminat to our mind."

Look ye there!

So they hunted an' they hollo'ed, and the next thing they did find  
Was a barn in a meadow an' that, too, they left behind,

Look ye there!

One said it was a barn, an' another he said "Nay,  
'Tis nothing but a meeting house, with steeple blown away."

Look ye there!

There were many more, all ending with Father's improvisations.

The farmers of this era, who held the island south and west to Tottenville, had ideal locations for enjoying the good things of life from a rural standpoint. The high backbone of the island on the northwest shielded them from the cold winds, and many times I have seen strong evidence of spring on the south slopes when sleighing was yet good north of the hills. A foothill gave high ground for their buildings, and as most of the holdings ran in long strips southeasterly some two miles to the lower harbor, they had all degrees of elevation, down to salt marsh and beach. Their life was more varied by far than the interior farmers'; they enjoyed not only the products of a very fertile soil, but sea food in abundance for the taking. They nearly all followed fishing, during the early spring months for shad, and at intervals during the summer mostly for what they called indifferently alewives, moss-bunkers, bony-fish or menhaden — all the same fish, caught for fertilizing purposes; but in making these hauls with seines, fykes or pound-nets they invariably caught numbers of food fish which were marketed. The creeks were full of crabs, shrimp, eels and soft clams, and the bay bottom covered with oysters, hard clams and lobsters, while wild fowl were plentiful. Altogether the old Dutchmen and Huguenots had a pretty good time, so long as they devoted a fair proportion of it to work, and did not drink too much Jainaica rum. No wonder it was a dis-



tinguishing characteristic of the Staten Islander that he seldom was seen farther away from home than New York city, and then not overnight!

The island during this period (1850 to 1870) was populated not only with the original landowners—Garretsons, Van Pelts, Van Horns, Wandels, Van Wageners, Kettle-tass', Housemans, Van Names, Tysons, Deckers, Vanderbilts and Van Cliefs of Dutch stock, and the French Huguenot names of Fountain, Perrine, Barton, Martineau, Seguire, de Hart, Dissosway, Cortelyou, Corson, La Tourette, Journey, Sharrott, Poillion, Manee, Pollock and Guyon—but with many wealthy New York business and professional men. The height of the latter's invasion was about 1858, when we were at the Asaph Stone place, and I well remember the Wednesday afternoons of the Driving Club, at their race course and clubhouse at the foot of New Dorp Lane, next to the beach. The club members interested themselves in their trotters and turnouts, while their families enjoyed the sea breeze, the band and the refreshments.

Prominent among them were old Commodore Vanderbilt, his brother Jacob, and several sons. One of these, William H., farmed for a living on New Dorp Lane, the old Commodore giving him the sweepings of the horse-car stables in New York as a help. Near us were also his sons-in-law Allen and Barker. These were not typical of the assemblage—simply rich and aggressive; still, they were the men of the time, who were making new world history. Mental attainments were represented by Judge William Emerson (brother of Ralph Waldo), George W. Curtis, William B. Townsend, Hall of the "Commercial Advertiser," the Minturn brothers, Davis, Hood, Meyers, and many more.

The Staten Island Railway was under construction at this time, and I distinguished myself at the age of seven by placing a large stone on the track and derailing a train of dump-cars. A lusty Irishman was braking on the last



car, and when the outfit went down the bank, he made a *break* for me; had it not been for a dense piece of woods near by, this account might never have been written! The first two locomotives for this railroad, the Gersh Banker and the Albert Journey, had been brought across the bay and landed at Clifton, then the terminus. They were discovered by us youngsters, and I, crawling into the fire-box to learn where the smoke went, had the door shut on me, and kept so for what seemed several decades, by my tormentors.

About 1858 Father purchased the Eaton place on Emerson's, or Strawberry Hill, at the corner of the Clove and Richmond roads. This was a beautiful spot, some 250 feet above the sea, with a view reaching from Keyport on the Lower Bay around by the east to the Palisades. Every approaching ship was visible on clear days when first she lifted from the horizon, and we could follow her course all the way to the city except for a mile or so when hidden by the hills between us and the Narrows.

At the time of the *Great Eastern's* first voyage we were much interested, and kept a lookout for her. We first saw her smoke; then as she neared the lightship we drove down to the old red sandstone batteries where the semaphores used to wave the news of incoming vessels to the city from Sandy Hook, and there saw the big ship round the southwest spit and pass us at the Narrows, anchoring in the Upper Bay. I was a little disappointed in her size, as the illustrated journals had portrayed her rail about level with the mastheads of other craft, which was decidedly misleading. However, we all went over her afterwards as she lay along the ends of the piers on the North River (being too long to enter any of the slips) and she seemed large enough then!

Her draft brought her so near the Sandy Hook bar that the insurance companies required her to adopt the East River-Sound route afterward. On entering the







Sound on her first trip, however, she ran on an uncharted shoal off Montauk Point, later named "Great Eastern Rock," and tore a hole forty feet long in her outer skin. As she had a complete double hull, provided with several compartments, she finished the trip as far as Flushing Bay without difficulty or danger, and might have returned to England as she was. Again the underwriters intervened, refusing to let her sail without repairs, and this was seemingly final, since there was no dry-dock in this country large enough to hold her. At last some ingenious chap contrived a huge sort of caisson which was clamped to her side with chain cables, calked water-tight and pumped out, and the repairs were made. I bought this caisson and had it broken up years after, and I still have a shackle-bar I found inside. Altogether she gave several examples of the peculiar difficulties attending any development ahead of current practice.

At the Eaton place Judge and Mrs. William Emerson and their sons William and Charles were our nearest neighbors. Here Mrs. Emerson gave me a fine hickory sled, made by Wandel, the wheelwright on the Clove Road, which I believe is still in existence, in the Ackerman family at Great Kills; it was made to last! After their removal the house was occupied by the Kissels, with four children near my age; they were charming people, and three of the children, Fred, Gustave and Ella, are well known in New York. It was with a relative of theirs, Dr. Stimson, that I stayed for a time one summer at the Glades House, Cohasset, Massachusetts, and saw a storm during which the spray flew over the top of Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, 114 feet high.

Another neighbor was Mr. Hall of the "Commercial Advertiser," and below was the Snuggery, a very old house once occupied by Judge Emerson. Mr. Clinch, brother-in-law of A. T. Stewart, and afterward Collector of the Port, was near; also the Davis family, James, George, William J. and Louise, who remained intimate



friends until the last one died a few years ago. James spent many of his winters at Coconut Grove. Up the Clove Road were the Barkers, Allens, Ellinwoods and de Puysters.

At the Episcopal Church on the Little Clove I attended my first Sunday and day schools, both conducted by the Rev. Dr. French. My class teacher was Caddy Vanderbilt, daughter of Captain Jacob, afterward Mrs. McNamee. Mrs. La Beau, a daughter of the Commodore, lived near. Father was quite intimate with the Vanderbilts; I remember going with him one evening to the house of Captain Jake, where, edging in too close behind the Commodore during a billiard game, to watch his stroke, I got a good punch in the nose from the butt of his cue! The Vanderbilt brothers were typically handsome Americans, and Captain Jake I was proud to have as my friend until his death.

Here also lived Captain Jerry Simonson, of Simonson & Bell, who built most of Vanderbilt's fleet of steamers. At their yard at Corlear's Hook on the East River was built the *North Star*, the first steam yacht of consequence, and many other famous craft. Simonson had a small sailing yacht of his own called the *Maria*, on which I took my second sail when about seven; well I remember being nearly pulled overboard by a shark while fishing during dinner, all hands but me being below.

September 1, 1858,<sup>1</sup> we attended the grand celebration on the completion of the first Atlantic cable,<sup>1</sup> with a parade by day, and torchlight procession and fireworks by night. These were in City Hall Park, and at the end of the evening the tower and upper story of the Hall were burned. On the way down the Bay that night when approaching Tompkinsville, then called Quarantine, we saw all the hospital buildings in a blaze. They had been fired by a mob of citizens after fruitless efforts to have them removed to another site. About this time I saw also

<sup>1</sup> This first cable failed in a month; permanent service opened in 1866.





the burning of the famous Crystal Palace, so it was a time of conflagrations for me.

Father's office was now at 40 Barclay Street, his partner being Thomas J. Davis, and this was the height of his business career, the firm's affairs being very prosperous. I heard him say that he averaged \$40,000 a year as his share, which was a very large sum in those days. Beside his regular business he was successful in the manufacture of print cloths and cloakings, for which he took prizes, and was New York agent for Grandfather's pencils.

At this period Uncle William Munroe built the famous Pacific Mills at Lawrence, Massachusetts. In the process he came to the end of his credit, and a big loss seemed at hand, but Father's standing in New York enabled him to raise the necessary money, so that the mills were completed, and became extremely profitable. Uncle William would undoubtedly have been very wealthy had not the failure of his health forced him to retire just as the business was reaching its greatest success.

Shortly after this Father made his first serious business mistake, becoming interested through scheming promoters in things of which he knew but little. One of these, the Dorchester Olive Freestone Co., practically ruined him in a few years. This company really had value; the stone was a good building material, as proven by many pretentious structures, especially the ornate bridges, etc., in Central Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. But through neglecting his dry-goods to manage the quarries in New Brunswick, with rascals for partners, and the hard times of the Civil War coming on, Father was forced under, and everything we had was sacrificed.

The war made exciting times on the island. Fortifications were hurried, and large recruiting and drilling camps were established, the latter showing us that "the enemy" consisted of more than those in the Confederate lines. Many recruits were of a poor class of men, and the new officers could not enforce order, so that it was unsafe





to be out after dark, and robbery was rampant. This, added to the draft riots, made it anything but pleasant.

The negroes had a particularly hard time; our coachman, Nelson, had to hide in the woods for a while, and the fact of our sheltering him and others of his color made us an object of attack by the rioters, who were mostly Irish. Hearing that they had left Stapleton one day to burn our house, Father hitched up a horse and drove down to meet them. They were so surprised that a little diplomatic talk turned them in another direction where, I am glad to relate, they were met by a battery of artillery and done up in short order. At another time as they were about to attack the ferry company's buildings, Captain Braisted turned hot water on them from the steamboat's pumps, and won the fight without bloodshed.

Mention of the Irish rioters calls to mind another encounter, some time previous, with "Little Dublin," as the center of the Irish settlement was called. John H. Austen had given me a very fine rooster, exceptionally handsome, which escaped one night, and we thought he was stolen. Next day, Sunday morning, we heard that he had been seen in the yard of one of the Irishmen, so Father and I walked over there. Sure enough, there he was, in the street, and as he was very tame I picked him up and we started back home. But an old woman spied us, and in five minutes we had a hundred screaming women about us, armed with sticks and stones, while the air rang with an assortment of language which was simply beautiful to hear! One of them smashed Father's silk hat, another grabbed the rooster and cuffed me, and the engagement was rapidly taking on a serious aspect when a peacemaker appeared in the person of an old Irishman, the justice of the village, and a great friend of Father's. He immediately took Father's side, roundly berating the mob: "What do ye mane be all this? Tom Munroe is all right, and what he says is the truth! Give him back his rooster, now, and be quick about it!" They looked a bit



dazed, but obeyed and scuttled off, while we went home — only to find *my* rooster already in our yard! The new one “escaped” that night, and went back home.

After the capture of New Orleans we were surprised one fine morning by the appearance, in rather bedraggled condition, of the Rev. John Fulton, son-in-law of Uncle Alfred Munroe, who was in business in that city. Having refused, with others, to pray for the President of the United States, Fulton was arrested by General Benjamin F. Butler and shipped to New York, where he was locked up in Fort LaFayette. Afterward he was paroled, and having no money or friends, he came to us and stayed until nearly the close of the war. Here we were with a real live rebel in the house, and it required all the restraint that hospitality entailed to prevent friction, for he was certainly very bitter. Father continued his singing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” before breakfast, while Nelly and I hoisted the flag on a fine new flagstaff. The flag cost a gold dollar at Lord & Taylor’s, and it was earned, I am proud to say, by my going alone to New York and having two teeth extracted by Dr. Blake.

Our play was on the lines of warfare — forts, with wooden guns and firecracker ammunition, as my parents thought; investigation would have revealed a real iron cannon and several pounds of powder surreptitiously bought for me by Nelson. Father appeared unexpectedly one day during a fierce battle back of the stable and received damage in his stovepipe hat from a charge of shingle nails which had gone somewhat wide of the enemy’s works, and this caused a stampede of both armies, with court-martial proceedings in my case.

When this blew over, and I was once more possessed of real ammunition, trouble began again. When the island railway was finished it interfered seriously with the profits of the Richmond stagecoach owned and driven by B. Y. Williams. This he resented vigorously, and continued running opposition for many years, until bank-



rupt. Naturally it did not add to his sweetness of temper, and the poor old man, long and lank, gradually became the enemy of various things in nature, more particularly bad small boys along his route, of which, sad to chronicle, I was one.

One day I heaved a snowball at him, miraculously escaped his blacksnake whip which snapped in the frosty air close in my rear, and was chased far over hill and dale while his passengers had a most tedious wait. I plotted revenge — and nothing short of complete annihilation would answer in those war times. So after the snow was gone and the roadbed was dusty, and therefore more suitable for mining operations without undue “boyual” labor, I built a mine to contain at least a pound of powder, with a train leading across the ditch handy to a clump of bushes, behind which your conspirator was to have watched for the stage. Then, as the horses crossed the fateful line, a piece of lighted punk was to have done the rest — but alas for well-laid plans! It is not known just what happened, but the presumption is that the bold Ralph, while covering over the train of powder, dropped the punk. A huge cloud of dust at once drew a veil over the scene. Kind friends led the sorrowful youth home, where much time and anguish were spent by his mother and the doctor in removing from his interior the dust and from his exterior the burnt powder. He was literally “hoist by his own petard.”

At this tender age I made a trip to Grandfather William's in Concord, Massachusetts, alone — at least comparatively so. I was put in charge of Captain Brown, then senior captain of the Old Colony Steamboat Co., commanding the *Metropolis*, a four-stacker. He put me on a high stool in the wheelhouse, and so interested was I in the doings that there I stayed until nearly five o'clock next morning when we reached Fall River. There were six men at the three wheels up the East River, with Brown leaning out the starboard window and his first pilot out







the port one. Little was said outside the usual commands to the quartermasters. When the wheel was hard over to meet a strong eddy off Hallett's Point, and had to be at once reversed to meet the strength of the cbb rushing over Hallett's Reef, there was a simple slap of the hand on the window casing. The men would spring from the wheels, which spun to port, and the instant they slacked three men climbed the spokes, and three got their shoulders under the opposite sides and did their best to put her hard over. Once on her course, another slap of the hand, and buzz would go the wheel again to steady as she is. Contrast all this activity and expenditure of strength with the present-day wheelhouse; orders in a low tone to the one quartermaster, usually a youthful person, standing before a little toy brass wheel, spun by a touch of the finger, and actuating the steam steering-gear on the lower deck — that's all.

I made many such trips, and actually got to know all the courses and running times between every light and headland from New York to Fall River before I was twelve. This trip, however, was my first attempt at crossing Boston alone — something of a feat even now — but I did it, without asking my way, and was soon in Concord. A pity all this smartness could not have stood by me through life!

Fine times I certainly had in Concord. My first recollections center on a big oven in which there were dozens of pics, mostly mince, around Thanksgiving time; a big garden full of apple and pear trees; the old pencil factory, with dusty tools and machinery; and the river, with boats, to keep away from which my dear old grandmother used to bribe me with small coins.

Here I learned to play croquet with Ralph Waldo Emerson's daughter Ellen, who was credited with having brought the game to this country from England. Here also I became acquainted with the Alcotts, Frank Sanborn, and many others — the Barretts, William W. Wheildon,



Horace Mann, and the Hosmers. Across the way from Grandfather lived Judge Rockwood Hoar, afterward Attorney-General under Grant. I learned to swim from his landing on the river, and many a wiggling his son Charley and I got for noise around the house. At this time Mr. Bull was perfecting the wild grape, which afterward spread over nearly the whole world as the Concord grape.

After learning croquet with Miss Emerson, and ascertaining that we could procure no implements except to order from Boston, Cousin Charley and I at once thought of the old home garret with its marvelous collection of things useful to boys, and the abandoned pencil factory with its tools just waiting to make old things useful again. So off we scuttled, quietly in the back door, and more than quietly up those steep back stairs, past the little room which Thoreau used to occupy when apprenticed to Grandfather Munroe, to the attic with its beautiful odor of white pine and cedar. Carefully we made our way over the great wide floor boards toward the eaves. Say! Wasn't it some hot up there! Hist! There was a four-poster, all apart, balls on the top, rounded legs, apparently made to order for the villainous conspirators.

It was afternoon, and the dear old Aunties were having their nap. One by one those posts just floated below, and along by the lilac bushes to the pencil factory, without detection. The subject of the conversion of an old bed to the furtherance of the new English game had been casually mentioned, with many allusions to Ellen Emerson, a dear friend of the Aunties, in hopes of smoothing the way to accomplishment, but the project, though not by any means turned down, was not definitely approved. Not wishing to risk actual refusal, we trusted to Miss Emerson's intercession if any trouble ensued, and went quietly to work out in the shop.

The balls were not exactly round, and somewhat large, as were also the mallets, fitted with broom handles. The



wickets came from a disused painted wire flower trellis. Next came the selection of location, easily accomplished in the three-acre lot surrounding the houses, by collusion with the gardener, who knew all of Aunt Mary's plans for many a year past. Then in the cool of the evening when the daily walk of the family took place, we two imps anxiously waited for the worst, which never came, for Aunty only said "Just why, Ralph, didn't you tell me all about it?" Two boys went to bed that night fully determined never to play that trick again.

On my return to Staten Island Father made inquiries among all the dealers in game implements in New York without finding a trace of a croquet set, so another improvised set was gathered, consisting of some small-sized bowling balls of hard vulcanized rubber, and corresponding hardwood mallets. We certainly got exercise and skill combined. Some years elapsed before manufacturers turned out implements cheap enough to popularize the game.





## II

### ENTER THE SEA

· **A**BOUT this time Susan Emerson, sister-in-law of the Sage of Concord, introduced me to the romance of the sea by the gift of "Masterman Ready" in three little volumes, which had come to her son William from his Grandmother Haven. I believe the love of the tropics is born in most boys of the temperate zone, and though it may remain latent, if once roused it is seldom quieted until satisfied. At any rate, so it was with me when I shed tears over the death of Marryat's hero of the Pacific; and when Robinson Crusoe hove his grappling-hooks into the rigging of my imagination, the lure of coral sands and waving palms was complete, though many years were to elapse before I saw either.

Through most of these years, however, I was within easy reach of the South Street wharves, which were a forest of masts, having changed little during the fifties and sixties. South of Wall Street the clippers lay, with their jibbooms rigged in so as not to poke the windows out of the warehouses across the street. Among them were *Flying Cloud*, *Davy Crockett*, *Sovereign of the Seas*, and other grand old ships. The spicy tang of strange Eastern merchandise mingled with whiffs of tar and strong tobacco, and here I spent almost every pleasant holiday, making friends with ship keepers and mates and coming home with rigging-tar much in evidence.

Here were all the varied cargoes of the seven seas, each more fascinating than the others — tea from China, spices from Java, dates, cheeses, whale-oil, sugar, wines, ivory, firecrackers, ginger, coffee, silks, laces, monkeys and parrots — the pungent brilliance of the wide world, flowing into the great city across the wharves.



Of especial interest to me were the West India traders, since these islands were almost within reach — brigantines, mostly, loading dried fish and staves and returning with sugar and molasses. None fixed themselves in my mind with keener charm and more enduring joy than the colorful, odorous fruit schooners, gleaming green and yellow with bananas, or tawny orange with pineapples, or pure gold with oranges, while the black deck-hands laughed with gleaming teeth and chattered unintelligibly.

These were small vessels from Cape Cod, Long Island and New Jersey, with a sprinkling of Bahama and Jamaica craft, the latter with darky crews, earringed and brightly clothed. Some of the names of these vessels still persist — the *Ricardo Barres*, Captain “Scud” Newton, who was said to have run eighteen months without reefing — carrying whole sail until he had to heave-to under try-sails; fruit was a perishable cargo, and the boats were driven without mercy. The *Hattie Haskell*, built by the Poillions at Brooklyn, was in the Martinique trade. The *Sarah Douglass* is still afloat, it is said, at Nassau. What yarns could have been told of sail-carrying in cold nor’westers to get that fruit to market in time! No more shall we hear of them; the United Fruit Co. has that business in hand, and sails are a thing of the past for the trade.

Most of my northern life was spent on Staten Island at Clifton, Stapleton and Great Kills, and there could be no finer stimulus to a growing love of the sea than that splendid outlook over the Narrows with its ever-varied ocean traffic, and the close contact with pilots, fishermen, wreckers, oystermen, shipyards and other maritime interests of the Staten Island shore. Whether this environment, or the inheritance from Ralph Middleton, John Stone and other seamen among my people had the greater influence, we need not argue; in any case it was soon evident that nothing could hold my interest long or effectively unless it was closely connected with the sea.



This was much to the discomfort of my mother, who seemed to dislike it greatly, although in after years when I was helplessly entangled in its meshes, she evinced much interest, and willingly accompanied me on many somewhat risky trips, always saying she was not afraid when with me — a comforting remembrance.

Shortly after the beginning of the Civil War I was sent to boarding school at the Eagleswood Military Academy, about a mile and a half west of Perth Amboy on the Raritan River. Father's early dry-goods business, it will be remembered, was under Marcus Spring.<sup>1</sup> After recovering from the 1835 fire Spring became quite wealthy, and one of his fads was the establishment at Eagleswood of a kind of community settlement, somewhat similar to Brook Farm, in which Emerson, Alcott and others figured. Mr. Spring seems to have financed the project, and when it went under, like all others, the property was left on his hands, consisting of several hundred acres of land, and a lot of brownstone buildings.

He decided to establish a school in them, and the first attempt was a co-educational affair, principaled by a Dr. Wells. I've come across several who attended it, notably John Price Wetherill of Philadelphia, who spoke very well of it; another graduate of my acquaintance was Emily Jenks, a relative of Emerson's. The school was soon changed, however, to a military academy, patterned after West Point, except as to age and qualifications for entrance. The academic department changed hands three times, and the military twice, during my three and a half years, indicating internal dissension, which I suspect was occasioned by the interference of Mrs. Spring. She was among the first of the abolition party, and a pioneer woman suffragist. Her father was Arnold Buffum of Rhode Island, one of twelve men who in 1833 founded the New England Anti-slavery Society.

My interest in the school centered in the naval training

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I, "The Munroe Family," page 369.







promised on a small revenue cutter, the *Harriett Lane*. She was designed by William H. Webb, of New York, and named for a niece of President Buchanan; her lines I still have, as well as a T-square which belonged to Captain Parker, her commander. But alas! the government soon took her from the school for use against the South, and nautical instruction was discontinued. With one of the old New York ferryboats she attacked Galveston, and both were destroyed.

On the school grounds were the studios of several well-known artists, among them William Page, afterward dean of American figure painters, and George Inness, equally prominent in landscape; also Edward Spring, eldest son of the school-founder, a sculptor of no mean ability. Military matters were distasteful to me, and being deprived of maritime aspirations, I got through with the routine of the former as best I could, attaining a corporality for proficiency in drill, but never having the thing at heart. In these circumstances I developed a friendship for the artists' colony, and was soon a frequent and privileged visitor among them, more particularly with Page. This did not develop any real artistic work in me; in fact, work of any kind, if it existed, had shown no signs. I did absorb a lot that was destined to give me a lasting love for things beautiful, and I was in luck.

Toward the end of my Eagleswood schooling, after the battle of Mobile Bay, Admiral Farragut, the hero of that fight, had occasion to visit Page's studio several times while sitting for his portrait. He usually preferred to walk up from Perth Amboy, and well I remember his looks; and especially his putting his hand on my head and complimenting me on the model of the *Hartford's* mast-head which I had helped to rig out of a cigar-box, sticks, wire and twine, for Page to use in this painting. During the fight the Admiral had stationed himself in the futtock shrouds, just under the main-top, in order to get as much as possible above the smoke, and he was represented in



this position in the portrait; therefore I have always claimed a share in this celebrated picture. Innumerable copies of it have been made, while the original went to Russia, having been presented by the Union League Club of New York to the Grand Duke Alexis when he was in this country some years later.

Inness I was not so familiar with. His two pretty daughters were an attraction, sure enough, and once when they were to give an entertainment to some of the boys, and my roommate George Armstrong and I were invited, we both practiced dancing assiduously so as to find favor with the young ladies. Horrible to relate, when the crucial time arrived, I was a complete failure, and never since have I had any taste for the amusement!

To dodge as much as possible of the military exercises I became a member of the band, playing the fife. The first year at the school was not happy, beginning with pronounced nostalgia, which was greatly aggravated by the system of hazing then in force. With the entry of new victims at the beginning of the second year we were relieved, and before long we became in some degree party to the doubtful fun, which later years made me condemn entirely as mere brutality.

The three and a half years at Eagleswood were largely wasted. I gained strength, self-reliance and more or less book-learning, with a large acquaintance of boys and young men from all over the States, Cuba and South America — in itself an education. But the system was defective, and I should not wish any child of mine to be subjected to the same hit-or-miss methods, or to run the same moral chances. I disobeyed nearly every rule at times, and some of this was justifiable, for schoolmasters are not infallible by any means, and we naturally rebelled, every pupil leaving once for several weeks.

I had not been long at school before a classmate, Armstrong, visiting in Perth Amboy, discovered a skiff for sale in the yard of a man named Ford, who kept a candy shop.



She was a bargain — two dollars, with oars thrown in — and after a short period of strenuous saving she was bought, carried to the river, and launched. Unfortunately her seams gaped from lying in the sun, and she filled much faster than even our youthful energy could bail, so that the five mile trip back to the school was out of the question. What to do?

The answer came from the spry young foreman of Ellis's shipyard, near by, who noticed our plight, brought cotton, and showed us how to give her a temporary calking. "There! Now she'll float. But be sure to take it all out when you get home, let her swell up in the water, and then calk her properly," and he shoved us off, waving away any suggestion of pay. This was "Uncle Cris" Brown, afterward head of A. C. Brown & Sons in Tottenham, who built many a sound yacht for me in later years, and became a lifelong friend.

So the first boat arrived at Eagleswood, was tightened, calked and painted; she was christened *Hornet*, and the name painted on her with stencils borrowed from the school painter, Tom McCann, who also figured in my later life. The *Hornet* proved a source of much pleasure and some little pain, the latter from being occasionally late at various functions, notably evening parade, supper and study-hour. The compelling lure of river and bay, and the various mischances of tide and weather conspired to break the military schedule of the school, and one may well feel that for a boy of twelve such adventures had an infinitely broader and more human value than another hour of drill, in strength of body and resourcefulness of mind.

A few incidents of the school life are vivid memories. My first attempt at a long swim was made in crossing the river, here nearly a mile wide. When about halfway over I got very tired, and not knowing how to float was almost giving up. Then, letting one foot drop, I found I was in less than four feet of water, and the relief was something







never to be forgotten. One of my companions almost lost his life on the same shoals by diving from a boat and ramming his head deep into the soft mud. If I had not quickly caught his thrashing legs and pulled him out, his name would have been graven on slate or marble.

One absence from drill was excused because it was occasioned by a school of smelt in the river, from which a large supply for the school and the neighbors was quickly taken.

Some of the winters of this period must have been quite severe, for I remember crossing on the ice from Totten-ville to Perth Amboy, and also skating down the lower harbor, or Raritan Bay, to Keyport.

After one of my visits home, as I was entering the cars to return, Father came running to tell me of Lincoln's assassination. Tears were in his eyes and he could hardly speak; we all felt as if someone near and dear had been taken from us.

*Hornet* soon inspired a rival — a magnificent Whitehall boat, complete with sails and awnings, which quite put the old skiff's nose out of joint. Within a few days, however, the new boat was partly wrecked at South Amboy, her crew being brought home wet and draggled, and *Hornet* went up to top notch in school respect, and stayed there, for while not beautiful or costly, she got there and back every time. This was a lesson in serviceableness rather than polish — sound strength and beauty of character rather than elaboration and fine finish, which has always characterized my taste in boats.

Among my Eagleswood mates were some well-known names. Louis C. Tiffany sat at the next desk, and was one of my chums. In his efforts at waterscapes, when boats were introduced, I usually made the preliminary sketch of the craft. R. M. Colgate was a roommate, and we kept in touch for a few years after, but the soap business and I had little in common and we drifted apart. Elliott, Freeman, Armstrong, Grossbeck, were other companions,



but none of these associations held for more than a few years. The trouble was that they were not pickled in brine, for from that time to this the sea and those about it claimed pretty much all my attention.

Eagleswood ended when the inconvenience of commuting by ferry led the family back to New York, this time to the house of Mrs. Beardsley in 17th Street, a very estimable woman, who remained a good friend until her death many years later. She had a son in the Navy who died a Rear-Admiral a short time since.

But Staten Island had laid its charm on us, and we soon returned, stopping a while with my mother's family, the Middletons, who were living on the Finger-board Road. There was another New York home, a rather pretentious house on 45th Street near Fifth Avenue, but the first summer brought on the country fever again, and a chance offer of nearly double the value of the property could not be refused.

After this Staten Island was our permanent home, and I was sent to a private school on New York Avenue, nearly opposite St. John's Church, and kept by Isaac Holden. My mates were Shirley McAndrew, Dan Appleton, Nat Marsh, George Schofield, Peter Austen, Raymond Brown, Cubberly Vanderbilt, and some others whom I've lost trace of. Holden was always one of us, and ready for a lark after school hours. He was an excellent teacher for boys who were willing and ready to learn, being splendidly educated himself, and capable of imparting it, but he was high-tempered and somewhat lacking in patience, which unfitted him for ordinary school work. Later he developed great business ability, and became secretary and manager of the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine Co., second largest in the country. We always continued the best of friends, and our cruises together extended as far south as the Florida Reefs, where I think he had some of the happiest times of his life in the pursuit of marine natural history, seaweeds



especially. He was a prominent member of the Torrey Botanical Club. "You incorrigible youth!" was his expression when catching us at any capers in school.

"Pete" Austen proved to be my particular chum, and his home, the old Lake-Austen house, formerly the manor house of all the easterly end of the island, became mine as well. The history of this house is very interesting; it is now about 270 years old, and is still occupied by the family. Peter later married my only living sister, after graduating from the School of Mines in Columbia and from the University of Berlin. Chemistry was his profession, and he held an eminent position, both as educator and consultant, until his death in 1907.

Peter's mother was a daughter of Peter Townsend, whose father owned and worked the old Southfield Iron Furnaces, and during the Revolution forged part of the heavy chain which spanned the Hudson River at West Point to keep the British from getting farther upstream with their vessels. A link and swivel of this chain is now on top of the old Franklin stove in the parlor of the Austen house.

The house is right on the shore of the harbor, so much so that in northeast gales the spray flies over it. One night when I was there a pilot-boat, the *Edmund Blunt* No. 2, dragged her anchors and came ashore, poking her bowsprit over the garden fence. It was bitter cold, and we had a tough time helping the crew land their effects with a sling rigged from the spring-stay, afterwards taking them into the house to warm up with hot coffee. This episode started a long friendship with one of her pilots, Captain Abe Jones, who for many years took upon himself the duties of marine foster-father to me.

Here I got quite interested in baseball, but the water had the strongest pull, and soon I was the possessor of a twelve-foot smack's dinghy, with a homemade sail and an American ensign nearly as large as the sail. Her anchor was a famous one — a model, made aboard the man-of-







war *New Ironsides* early in the Civil War and given to the Sailor's Sanitary Fair in Boston as a contribution from the ship's snithy. With it was a model of the yacht *America* made at the Charleston Navy Yard; this was bought and given to me by my Uncle William, and is now in my library.

Many delightful sails and some cruises were taken in this dinghy, to Sandy Hook and even Rockaway. Its first trip to sea I well remember. Owing to some fancied trouble at home I had determined on a voyage of discovery, so providing myself with a few sandwiches and a jug of water I set sail one morning, going out past Coney Island. This then boasted only a small house and a few sheds at Norton's Point, and the old Neptune House, with bathhouses, down about halfway — what a contrast to the showing now! After leaving the point I coasted along, quite oblivious of any dangers of the deep and thoroughly enjoying the situation, until abreast of Rockaway Inlet, where a big sea suddenly made up offshore, formed into a breaker, and rolled fearfully toward me. Somehow the dinghy rode over it, but as it passed I saw the sand bottom, and my fright was complete. This was my first experience with a shoal and a breaker, and to say that I got out of that place as fast as oars and sail would permit is putting it mildly!

All thoughts of further exploration were knocked out, and I headed for home, but a head tide and little wind held me until long after dark. In rowing across Gravesend Bay I got another horrible scare from a great sturgeon which shot straight up in the air close alongside, fell back with an awful splash and drenched me from head to foot, nearly swamping the boat. The water was extremely phosphorescent, which added to my terror, and when I finally reached home, in the early hours of the morning, my roving and piratical desires were very tame, and remained so until after several hearty meals.

But the following holiday found me off on another



attempt, this time with a crew consisting of our school-master Holden. We reached Rockaway all right, hunted up our friends the Cheevers at Wave Crest, and got home in time for Monday morning's school opening. The only drawback was the inability to lie out straight at night, the thwarts being in the way, and our only wish was for a boat long enough to avoid this inconvenience.

About this time I became acquainted with one of the water celebrities of New York harbor, Captain Jim Stillwell, probably the best pilot and sailer of fore-and-aft vessels up to that time, with whom I was afterward intimate. With his brother-in-law, Uncle Joe Sylvie, he kept a boat-letting establishment a short way north of the Austen home. Besides small boats he owned a smart thirty-foot sloop called the *Fanny*, in which he and I took many a bluefishing trip in the summer. A year or so later, on acquiring another and larger craft, he made me captain of the *Fanny*, then the height of my ambition.

The sloop was long past her youth, and Captain Jim warned me not to "drive" her, but youthful ideas of sail-carrying differed from his, and the first day's bluefishing was too much for her; the old seams worked, and during the night she sank at her moorings. There was some coolness for a week or so, but a friend then cleared the sky by remarking "Captain Jim is proud of you for cracking on, all the same!"

Nearly all my holidays, vacations and some doubtful times for four years were spent with Captain Jim, rather to the discomfort of my mother, who did not consider these occupations as stepping stones to the Presidency of the United States! She did not appreciate their value under such an honest clean man as Stillwell. The waters of New York harbor and its approaches became an open book to me. Tides, squalls, gales, calms and fogs he taught me to circumvent, and the handling of fore-and-afters in every detail — the best of experience, no matter what the occupation of after life. The self-reliance of the



man who has been well taught when young to knot, splice, serve, hand, reef and steer is certainly one of the best assets in the struggles of life.

I am glad to feel that this affection for Stillwell was fully returned. Early in our friendship Captain Jim sold me a little centerboard boat of ten and a half feet length, for a small fraction of her value. She was christened *Nonesuch*, and notwithstanding that she was a skimming-dish, pure and simple, I used her for a number of years, even after the possession of larger craft, bluefishing off the lightship and cruising alongshore as far as Fire Island, without an accident.

This boat led to an amusing clash with Pilot Abe Jones, who discovered *Nonesuch* bluefishing outside the bar where he was on station in No. 2, and promptly ordered the tiny craft back to shore. But I was picking up fish quite lively, and the weather to my mind was fine, so I refused. Then Jones swore that he would take me on board, boat and all, and carry me back, but found this easier said than done. Do what he would the little boat was too quick on the helm for the larger, and too fast for his yawl and crew, so he finally gave it up, swearing dreadful things when he caught me ashore.

About this time we moved to a house on Townsend Avenue bought from Thomas LeClair, the artist, in which we were to live for a number of years. Mr. LeClair had erected a flagstaff during the Civil War, and topped it with a handsome gilded spread eagle. This I took with me to Great Kills in 1880, and seven years later, on the founding of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, it went to Florida and adorned the club flagstaff, first at the rooms over my boathouse, and in 1901 on the "new" Coconut Grove clubhouse. In April, 1926, the house was removed and the eagle placed in honorable retirement in my library.







### III

#### YOUTH, BUSINESS AND BOATS

THE move to the LeClair house may be taken as the division between boyhood and youth, between school and business. Manhood was imminent, and the business of "getting on in life" must be attended to. But the sea still sparkled, the bellying canvas tugged irresistibly, and no shore-keeping business could comfortably fill my life. I took a course of mechanical drawing at Columbia which was later of great value, spent a year with the New York Rubber Co., another with the Russel File Co., and a third converting Civil War tent-poles into fence-pickets.

This was the period of the "Cunning Clam Cagers of Clifton," a society for the purpose of close intimacy with the festive clam in all forms. The outings of this club, usually to New Creek, a short distance to the northeast of Elm Tree Beacon, or to the mouth of the Shrewsbury River, were events of joy. During the winters the club met once or twice at the boathouse of Captain Jim Stillwell, partaking of oysters and other refreshments, and usually ending with a dance, to the tune of the "Dying Bluefish," composed and rendered by myself, on the flute! In my library at Coconut Grove is a wooden ladle, made by me with turned bowl and steamed and bent handle, which bears the date January 14, 1871, and the names of the members, now all gone but myself.

The activities of the "Cagers" were soon enlarged by the possession of a sizable boat. On one of my numerous evening returns from the Austen house, wind northeast and blowing hard, I heard calls for help from the water. Taking my boat and rowing offshore, I discovered a large cabin catboat stranded on some sunken rocks. I took off

# THE JOURNAL

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the crew, and spent the rest of the night in heaving the craft clear of the reef and keeping her afloat afterward. In return for this, the owner, Mr. Greenfield, turned her over to me to use as much as I wished, merely stipulating an occasional sail in her. This was surely a prize. Thirty feet over all and cat-rigged, it sometimes took all our strength and skill to handle her. She steered hard off the wind, and often four of the Clam Cagers had to be at the tiller at once.

So it was on August 8, 1870, when we were out witnessing the great race of the British yacht *Cambria* against the fleet for the Queen's Cup.<sup>1</sup> There were more vessels in New York harbor on that day than ever before or since, and this, coupled with a very fresh breeze from the south-southeast, made navigation a strenuous affair. We pulled through without parting a rope-yarn; not so, however, with many others.

The old *America*, original winner of the cup, was anchored close by our place, and was naturally the recipient of much attention. The tide was running strong flood early in the morning, and the wind being in the same direction made it especially dangerous for sailing craft to pass through the overcrowded anchorages. One sloop-yacht in particular, with flags flying, black with people, a brass band fairly rending the air, and all hands shouting a salute to the *America*, in attempting to cross the latter's bow, was swept by the tide right onto her jibboom, which went through the sloop's mainsail and carried away everything above deck. The wreckage, being quickly cut away by the crew of the *America*, fell in a confused mass, and completely snuffed out the band and other noisy enthusiasm; as the wreck drifted up the bay the various members of her once-gallant crew could be seen crawling out from under the canvas. They were pictures of misery and disappointment, for of course they missed seeing the race, in addition to having a heavy bill to pay. Too much

<sup>1</sup> *America's Cup.*



enthusiasm is a bad thing, especially in crowded waters on a boat.

By taking short cuts across the angles of the course the Clam Cagers managed to see nearly all of this race, and it was a great one, *Cambria* being badly beaten by the winner, *Magic*, and several others, including *America*. Many years afterward one of the *Magic's* brass guns, which bellowed itself nearly to bursting after that race, was presented to the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, and continues ready for duty to this time.

*Cambria* was one of the first vessels to bring wire rigging to America. She was consigned to Henderson Brothers, agents of the Anchor Line Steamship Co., whose manager, Mr. McDonald, had been our neighbor for years, and he at once gave me an introduction to Captain Woods of the yacht. As her anchorage, while fitting out for the race, was close by our factory wharf, I had many opportunities of going aboard, and by making myself useful in passing the ball for the riggers I learned much about the splicing and handling of wire rope, which was then confined to a very few persons on this side of the water.

The cup race of the following year, 1871, *Livonia* vs. *Sappho*, was an eventful one for me. Captain Jim Stillwell was engaged as pilot for *Livonia* by Mr. Ashbury with some difficulty, evidently being reluctant to serve. Mr. Ashbury did not understand this, and became a trifle annoyed. "What's the matter, me mon? I've a fine craft and crew, and sure, money is no object!" The word "money" put the captain right on his mettle, for he answered, quick enough, "'Tain't money, Mr. Ashbury, that's bothering me, but I've been sailing winning yachts for many a year, and I hates to get licked at this time o' life."

They came to terms, however, and Stillwell's thorough knowledge of New York waters, and his fidelity to *Livonia* after promising to do his best, are illustrated by an incident occurring on one of the races. To secure the young







flood which makes up close along the beach, *Livonia* had to cross the False Hook shoal, or Oil Spot. There was quite a sea running, and a fresh breeze. Captain Jim asked Captain Woods to tell him just what water the vessel drew, to the inch. Then he asked if she would stand striking once or twice, and on being assured that she would, and that they were willing, headed her for the shoal, simply remarking that she would strike, but not stop. So it happened, a few of the crew being taken off their feet, and the move lacked but little of winning the race. The mere fact of touching bottom of course involved Captain Jim in considerable criticism, and if *Livonia* had stopped on the shoal, where would his reputation have been? He knew she wouldn't!

I was asked by Captain Jim to sail on *Livonia* on the first race of this series as a witness in case of controversy, but on our arrival Captain Woods regretfully declared it impossible to take a passenger. By the rules of the Royal Harwich Yacht Club he was already overmanned, and was sending two of his crew ashore. Captain Jim was greatly incensed, and was for going ashore himself, not being too keen about the race at any time, but was eventually pacified, and I departed with the superfluous crew.

It was now too late to board any other boat to see the race, and I was, of course, properly disgusted. But as I landed, at the Coast Wrecking Co's pier, a large sea-going tug, the *Leon*, arrived, and I, being nearest, was hailed by her captain, asking if I knew of anyone who would like to see the race, as he had been chartered for stake-boat at a few minutes' notice, without time to ask anyone; there was a Delmonico lunch aboard, sent by the yacht club.

Maybe this wasn't luck! I scuttled ashore through Stapleton, being allowed fifteen minutes, but only managed to find my friend Scofield, on his way to New York, and a chap named Eddy. We went right aboard the *Leon* and steamed for the lightship. It was beginning to breeze



up by the time we reached her, and there were few spectators in evidence. We soon took aboard a very nautical-looking chap (captain of the *William Fletcher*, Committee Boat), who had been detailed to run off the twenty miles to windward, and started south-southeast.

Our nautical sharp (who was really and truly one, having been mate of a Black-Baller) was resplendent in blue pea-jacket, buttons big as saucers, glazed cap and earrings. We heard him roaring orders like a mad bull long before we got alongside his boat, and the importance of the occasion and himself together were great. All this continued for a few miles on our course, and we were properly impressed, until suddenly he was missed, and I was made a committee of one to find him. It did not take long, for on his knees, with his head over the rail, was the old tar, communing with Neptune. I would have made a retreat, but he had seen me, and turning a sad face, said something about his breakfast having disagreed with him, and would I mind watching the patent log — and all so meek and lowly in contrast with an hour before!

The wind continued to freshen and the sea to make, and by the time the twenty miles were logged we knew that an interesting race was booked. Letting go our anchor we looked for the contestants astern, and could just make them out, *Sappho* under lower sails only, *Livonia* lugging a fore-topsail, and the former with a good lead. Nearer they came, with all the wind they wanted, and by the poor weather *Livonia* was making, she had too much, and that topsail should have been taken in long before. At times she apparently went in clear to her foremast, headsails and foresail wet nearly halfway aloft, and angle of heel much greater than *Sappho*.

It was a race, however, such as few have seen. On approaching the mark *Sappho* timed herself so as to round us on the starboard tack, and thus avoid a jibe, which was done in a most superb manner. Sam Greenwood, her sailing master, stood on the windlass-bitts where the





two quartermasters could see him, with every man at his station, and W. P. Douglass sitting in the cockpit as comfortable as could be, and the grand old schooner swept by us, the end of her main boom clearing the jack-staff on the tug by a few feet, twenty-odd minutes ahead of the Englishman. Before her sheets were fairly eased, up went her club-topsails, main-topmast balloon stay-sail and balloon jib, without a hitch, her crew of over fifty tailing onto the halyards, which ran through leading deck-blocks. This was the best bit of light-sail setting I ever saw, and done in a good thirty-mile breeze and a jump of a sea. It was before the days of snapshot photography, or I would have perpetuated it.

*Livonia* came lumbering up on the opposite tack; why, no one knows. She passed us heeling to such an extent that the men tending the lee sheets and runners preparatory to a jibe were sliding down the deck almost on their backs, and old Captain Jim waved his hand at me, sitting on deck with the other hand through a stanchion-cavel, holding on for all he was worth. Everything and everybody was soaking wet — a lively picture, but a sad contrast to the boat ahead.

Then came the jibe. I've seen some in my day, but that capped them all. Over went that main boom with a crash, notwithstanding the relieving tackles and sheets manned by most of the crew, and down went *Livonia* until almost nothing was to be seen except the shining copper of her bottom. Captain Jim said afterward that the upper dead-eyes of the lee rigging were under water, and he was a truthful man. Slowly she righted as the sheets were eased off, but was miles away before her kites were set, and she lost more time to *Sappho* on the run home.

Our fun now began. Towboats of that day were imperfectly supplied with means for getting anchors, and the next half-hour was spent by us partly under water in helping the small crew at that task. Then, as we fell off in the trough of the sea, the tiller-rods jammed, and





several seas boarded us to a somewhat dangerous extent. We were soon under way again, and landed at Stapleton about dark, having been the only spectators of two-thirds — the finest part — of one of the most spirited yacht races on record. Even at the finish, owing to the heavy sea, the time had to be taken from the Sandy Hook Main Beacon.

This year (1871) put me in charge of the finest boat yet, the thirty-foot cat-rigged yacht *Nora*, formerly *Mayotta*, built for John Harper, the publisher, by Harry Smedley of Penny Bridge, a famous racing-boat man. She was owned at this time by a well-known railroad contractor of New York who occasionally took his friends for a sail, but having had unfortunate experiences with caretakers, told me to take her and do as I liked, agreeing to give ample notice should he want her.

The beginning of our acquaintance was odd, to say the least. He, with several friends, had been away all day fishing, and on their return it was evident that the fish had bitten poorly, and that disappointment had driven the quartet to overindulgence in stimulants. This interfered sadly with the skipper's judgment of distances and of the boat's fore-reaching in attempting to make his moorings, to which the dinghy was made fast. After several futile round-ups, the last but one of which went clean over the dinghy and nearly rammed the wharf, the moorings were finally caught and made fast. Throughout this performance another Clam Cager and myself were near by in a boat, and sad to relate were loudly enjoying the mishaps — the more so since rumors of disparaging remarks about my sailing ability, made by the skipper of the *Nora*, had reached me.

His next move was to take off his straw hat and put on his silk stovepipe, I presume to add dignity to the commands about to be issued, which were to lower away mainsail. *Nora's* topping-lift rove through a single block at the masthead, and the fall came down with the hal-



yards — a poor arrangement, as was proved on this occasion. The mate cast off the lift first, and getting no results, proceeded to cast off everything in sight. Down came the whole rig, the boom striking the skipper square on top of the stovepipe hat, telescoping it clear down over his ears, and laying all hands low, with the sail over the bunch. The mingled sounds of "mirth and gladness" that came out from under that canvas would have set fire to it had it not been damp!

Someone managed to crawl out and top the boom up again, and soon the gallant crew were huddled around the old man, whose stifled pipings were still issuing from under his hatband. Vain were the efforts of the faithful at first; finally the rim came off, but with no improvement in language perceptible. Then piece by piece that noble tile gave way, and the straw hat was resumed by a very red-faced and angry man. The sail was furled, and the crew proceeded to unjoint poles and get ready to go ashore, and were standing in a row on one side of the cockpit. The skipper was now trying to unship the six-foot tiller, which persisted in sticking; to get more power he put his foot against the rail, said something of an impolite nature, swayed back with all his might, shook it viciously, and out it came! Tiller and skipper went the length of that cockpit in proper battering-ram style, and that crew, where were they? The recording angel, I trust, has blotted it out!

By this time our vociferous admiration of these proceedings had drawn the skipper's complete attention, and if ever two youngsters got a dressing-down in wrathful vocabulary, we surely did. We were somewhat ashamed, and dubious of further meetings with the old gentleman; what was my surprise a day or two later when he offered me the boat! He became a good friend until his death some years later.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We may note this sentence as typical of the Commodore's relations with men. However they began, the result was lifelong friendship. V. G.



Soon after this *Nora* figured in a race which I remember with delight as a bit of youthful resourcefulness, and as evidence of my already strong preference for able and serviceable boats as compared with racing machines. I have keenly enjoyed many a well-fought race, and produced several boats which were seldom or never beaten, but no boat could hold my affection which was not able, strong and sound in design and condition.

During my charge of *Nora*, while measurer of the Stapleton Yacht Club, an annual regatta was held. These races had degenerated into a competition between two racing machines owned by somewhat wealthy men; the other boat owners stood little or no chance of winning a prize, and the few who did enter simply made a procession. *Nora* with her cruising rig stood no chance in the usual summer weather, and was not entered, but the morning of the race opened up with heavy wind and rain from the south, and old Uncle Joe Sylvie, as I passed his boathouse, sung out "Now's your chance, boy! Go in, and clean them up!" With only half an hour to the start, no crew, and grass several inches long on the boat's bottom, the proposition was not attractive. Still, as Uncle Joe offered me his man, Bob Hobbs, and the wind seemed increasing, we got under way, ran down to the Coast Wrecking wharf, picked up several boys, and going alongside the committee boat, the steamer *Fort Lee*, entered *Nora*, amid more or less facetious talk about her racing condition.

Half an hour after the start, justifying Uncle Joe's prediction, we were a long way in the lead, with the two machines struggling along behind trying to carry their overpress of sail. Each had, however, the pick of the harbor for crew, with Captain Jim Stillwell at the wheel of one, and an equally well-known skipper in the other, and no expense spared in preparation. Some half-dozen other craft made up the rear. The tide was young flood.

Off the tail of the West Bank the wind suddenly







dropped to a very moderate breeze, and in a few minutes the whole fleet had caught and passed the *Nora*, with much and loud expression of sympathy for me — not appreciated, however! Away they went, all following Captain Jim, who was aiming to lee-bow the young flood in the Swash Channel out past the Roamer Shoals, so as to fetch Gedney's Channel sea-buoy, the outer mark.

Seeing the uselessness of following, I got on top of the house with my glasses to look for other chances, and there, off Rockaway, some eight miles away, I could just make out a schooner with wind east, and all she could carry. Slacking off sheets we let her go east across the East Bank. Half an hour later we were becalmed for a few minutes, then got the easterly breeze, headed for the outer mark, and rounded it just four miles ahead of the other boats in the race!

This lead we did not quite keep to the finish, running into light weather again inside the harbor, but on arrival there was no one to take our time, and our only salute was from one of the Staten Island ferryboats, whose captain, Sam Chambers, after asking us how things stood, blew his whistle all the way from Stapleton to Clifton, bringing out the fire department and getting a severe reprimand from his superintendent, Captain Jim Braisted.

Soon Captain Jim Stillwell, in the supposed winning boat, came in, along with the judges' boat and the rest of the fleet. We of course claimed the race, and were treated to raillery unlimited, as apparently no one had seen us go around the outer mark; but when, at the grand meeting that night to distribute prizes, Captain Jim got up and offered to make affidavit that *Nora* did round the buoy properly, he having seen her, no one questioned his well-known honesty. Much to the disappointment of those racing machine crews, which had said so much at various periods of the race, we took home the fifty-dollar



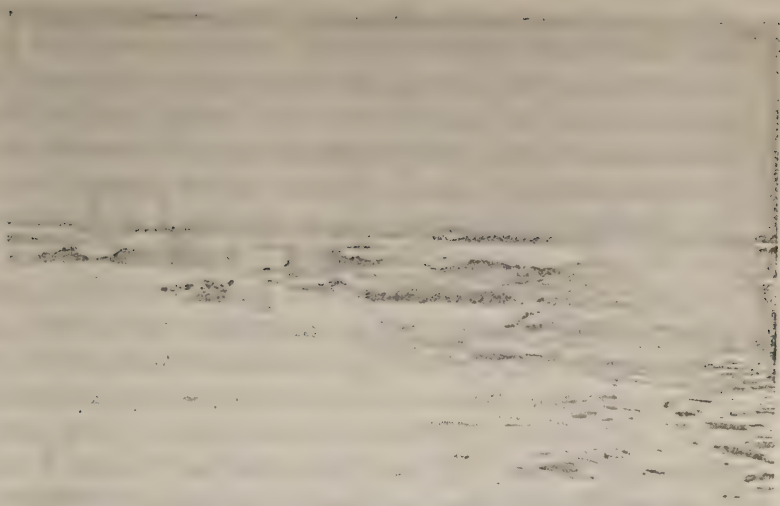
Citizens' Silver Cup, a fine set of colors, and a box of cigars — that is, what was left of the last. After this event, regatta courses were carefully hedged in by buoys, beacons and marks other than the outer or turning one, which until then had not been generally the custom, "Get there and back" being the usual extent of sailing directions.

Possession of *Nora* soon led to more extended cruises, and one morning, in company with Raymond Brown, I started down the Long Island coast, past Rockaway and Jones's Inlet, and entered at Fire Island. This was my first experience with an exposed ocean sand-bar, and as we approached it with a freshening breeze and increasing sea, I was much discomfited at not seeing any entrance through the line of breakers, which extended for a mile or more across the inlet's mouth. It looked as though we would have to stay outside, or run back to Coney Island. Then, happening to look offshore, we saw a small sailboat approaching, evidently bound into Fire Island. So we waited until it passed us and followed it in, discovering, as we got close to the breakers, that there was a clear channel, only very narrow.

Once in, we ran along the eastern point, and noticing a comfortable, old-fashioned sort of hotel, came to anchor, and soon were seated at a fine dinner at the old Dominy House, where Steve Conklin and his wife, Caroline, did all they could to make us feel at home. I write familiarly of them, though this was my introduction, for soon after we became the best of friends.

The house had been built many years previous by a man named Dominy, on what was then the ocean, or south, side of Fire Island Beach, which at that point was about three-quarters of a mile wide. When I first saw it, it was within about a hundred and fifty feet of the bay, or north, side, showing, what is well known, that the south side of Long Island in this vicinity, at least, grows slowly to the southward.





FIRE ISLAND BEACH



DOMINY HOUSE, 1902

The deckhouse barroom, with its sheathing of name-boards and scroll work,  
was already gone





Dominy's occupation while he lived in this house is open to much conjecture and still more romance. Ostensibly he kept a summer beach resort for sportsmen, but well-founded tradition says that he was next in rank to a first-class smuggler, and the stories of his wrecking activities and dubious dealings with owners' and underwriters' agents would make a book. He had departed this life when I arrived on the scene of his exploits, and his family was keeping a hotel at Bayshore, but the old house, with its curious arrangements of cellars, garrets, etc., bore mute testimony to its former owner's thrift; the outstanding barroom was made of an entire ship's cabin, completely covered on the outside with the name-boards and carved work of wrecked vessels. By 1902, when I visited the place again, all this had disappeared, together with everyone connected with the old times.

After dinner we made inquiries as to the navigation of the bay, got under way, and by four o'clock were anchored off Bellport, some sixty miles from our start in the morning. We passed the night at this charmingly primitive place and then turned homeward, stopping at Patchogue, Sayville, and Penataquid, or Bayshore, and again at the Dominy House. Here we waited a day or so for a favorable run outside to Staten Island, which was made without incident.

I saw at Fire Island a new type of boat, which greatly excited my admiration, with boatmen to match, and in all my experience since then have seen nothing to alter my first opinion. I have designed and built better boats, perhaps through being unhampered by the limitations of Great South Bay; the men, however, were as good as ever could be.

This cruise opened up a new field, and I became fairly possessed of a Fire Island fever, much to the dismay of my mother, whose dislike of the sea was strong, while her efforts to keep me from it seemed doomed. I got permission to have the *Nora* altered into a sloop, from the cat



rig; to get in another Fire Island cruise, I suggested that the work be done at Patchogue, and *Nora* started east without much delay. This alteration was evidence of good sense on my part, surely, for that same season, while again on my way to Fire Island, with several of the Clam Cagers aboard, we got caught some three miles west of the Fire Island bar in the beginnings of a tropical cyclone; had it not been for the new rig we would surely have lost the boat, if not some lives.

The blow began with a squall out of a clear sky, catching us quite unprepared, with topsails set. That we got them off her and close reefs tucked in without damage speaks well for the crew. A barometer, if we had had one, would probably have foretold this blow. We should have taken notice of the sea, which had been increasing rapidly, without apparent cause, for several hours previous, but we were too inexperienced in storm lore. Anyway, we handled the boat all right, and after about the liveliest thrash to windward I've ever had, went in over the bar, which was by that time raging, and let go our anchors close under the inside beach.

And here happened what I have never allowed to occur since. The chap paying out cable let the turns slip off the windlass-head, and was unable to regain them; the hawser came spinning out of the deck-pipe, and as the end was not made fast, it looked like a lost anchor and much trouble ahead. All hands rushed forward, and throwing ourselves in a body on the rope, we were dragged clear out to the bowsprit end, and jammed in a bunch under the jib stay, with the skin off fingers and other places, but the boat snubbed. Never since that occasion have I failed to make the ends of cables well fast, and halyards, too, for by that time climbing masts in a heavy seaway to reeve them off, when carelessly allowed to get adrift, had lost its charms.

On our way to windward we passed a large catboat named *Tommy Dodd*, under close reefs, also trying to make



the inlet. The rig was against her, and her crew of two had to beach her, where she rolled over and over in the breakers, snapping off her mast and centerboard. Being very strongly constructed she did not go to pieces, but was gotten off and refitted, and about twenty years later came sailing into Coconut Grove for provisions, on her way to Galveston.

All this time everything pertaining to blue water was taking a deeper and deeper hold on my heart and imagination. Businesses might come and go, but the real business of life for me was clearly maritime. I knew by sight nearly every yacht of importance on the coast, as well as every sail or steam ship of any note. The California clippers were still in their prime, and I knew all their names off-hand, and many of their skippers, and have stood on South Street piers many a time to see them haul out for sea.

The ship *Agra*, East Indiaman, Captain Oswald Miller, was one of my most intimate of the square-riggers, and the old captain remained always one of my best friends. He was a highly educated man of Danish family, whose father was collector of the port of Copenhagen. One of our neighbors, Sam Hicks, became an invalid, and made a voyage on *Agra* with his wife, a sister of my chum Austen, in the hope of recovering his health, which proved a vain one. His wife had enjoyed the friendship with Captain Miller, and later married him. Thenceforth she accompanied the Captain in all his wanderings, usually the protracted trading voyages of that day in the East, some three years in duration.

His next ship, *Samar*, built by Donald McKay of East Boston, was planned in part for her comfort, the cabins being fitted and furnished in a manner unequaled in that time. She was not a clipper, capacity and comfort evidently being at a premium in her trade as compared with extreme speed. Mrs. Miller voyaged long with the Captain, and when he retired she had been sixteen times around the Horn.







Photographs of *Samar's* cabins are among my collections, and her model hung in my drafting room at Coconut Grove, until that building was destroyed by the hurricane of 1926. The model was salvaged, revamped and hung in my library. Some years ago, while hunting up another vessel among the South Brooklyn wharves, I caught sight of familiar lines several piers away, and going 'round, found the good ship condemned, and about to be stripped for a coal barge. For years she was towed by the nose at the end of a hawser; rather had she gone down at sea, or gone into kindlings on a reef while still a fabric of dignity and beauty! She did at last founder at sea, and went to rest, spared the final ignominy of the "boneyard."

Photography had early interested me, many years before the "Kodak," when amateur photographers were few indeed.<sup>1</sup> The new art attracted wide attention, of course, and when it was applied to *Samar*, it was natural for Captain Miller to connect it with the strange lands and people among which he voyaged. This led to an interesting proposition. *Samar* often lay a month or more in each port, and all the details of trade being in the hands of the supercargo, the Captain was idle. "Ralph," he said, "I tell you what we'll do. You come a voyage with me and bring your camera. We'll leave the ship's long-boat here, and take a little yawl-rigged yacht in its place — a good stout boat, fitted up comfortably for you and me, with room for a hand or two. When we get settled in port we'll just slip off in her, and *see things*. We'll cruise the nooks and corners of the East Indies, and you'll make pictures that will be 'way ahead of anything we've

<sup>1</sup> He developed unusual skill, and the resulting negatives are now of unique value. Photographs of scenery and general subjects taken in the early seventies are rare enough, and his are characterized by careful good taste in composition and lighting, exceptionally fine detail from excellent lenses carefully handled, and by chemical work, both in developing and in printing, far ahead of current practice today. Many of his early prints, most of them on homemade paper, are as clear and bright now as half a century ago. How many of our "snapshots" will be good in 1980? V.G.



ever had of the East — the first photographs ever taken. What do you say?"

My reaction to his proposition is easily pictured. Adventure — travel — mystery — "the long trail" — the perfume of the spicy East — strange people — strange lands — new climates — palms — coral — queer fruits — monkeys — parrots — typhoons — all of them stranger far then than in this day of steamer, telegraph and half-tone print. Of course there was but one answer in my heart — and equally of course, I could not go! There were my parents to consider and a world to conquer here at home, and to take three years out of the best of my youth for a "mere lark" was not to be considered. But think of the value today of those lost pictures — the first, by many years, of the most colorful and fascinating scenes in the world!

I may add that the good Captain wanted the benefit of my experience in small boats, as well. Like many ship captains, he had little knowledge of boat-handling. Though he had been raised at sea on his father's ship, small fore-and-afters remained a mystery and a torment to him. It was my delight to tempt him into one on a rough day, and then listen to his candid opinion of small craft and those who went in them of choice!

With the model of *Samar* in my room were Captain Miller's sextant and binoculars, cherished relics of a splendid seaman, and reminders of this golden opportunity lost. These binoculars once figured in an odd coincidence. On the completion of the boathouse in Coconut Grove, I wanted a first-class single-draw telescope, with which, from the second floor, I could command the Bay and the Reef, and even the edge of the Stream.<sup>1</sup> Through Captain Miller I knew of a good

<sup>1</sup>The completeness with which the Commodore kept track of everything within twenty miles was always surprising. In the days of Camp Biscayne and the short cruises he followed many excursions throughout, greeting the returned cruisers with questions which showed an astonishingly detailed knowledge of their doings. After a three days' trip, for instance, out to the Light and down to Elliott's Key, we would



second-hand instrument dealer at Wall and South streets, and for several months he sent me various glasses to try out. At length I selected a fairly good two-draw glass, but was never really satisfied, for I had high standards of comparison in a glass made originally for the Canada-United States survey, and entrusted to John Austen to keep for a friend, who left it with him for twenty-five years, and then recovered it! Through it we could read Trinity clock in New York, and the signs at Erie Basin, nearly six miles away. Finally the dealer told me that he could not get what I wanted. "But I know where there is such a glass, and it can be bought for thirty-five dollars, only there is no commission in it for me."

"That's pretty high."

"Yes, but it is the only one that will suit you; its only defect is a rather small field."

He took me to one of the shipping offices, which was in charge of a young clerk, Bartlett. "Yes," he said, "here it is. Try it out at the window," but it was a heavy, smoky day, and I could not tell much about it, so handed it back. Bartlett asked a question or two of my companion and then said, "Take it along to Staten Island and try it at leisure, if you wish." Sure enough, it tested well beside Austen's, and I took it.

When I paid Bartlett for it he happened to remark that his father had commanded the *Annie H. Smith*, and carried this glass on her. "Well," I exclaimed, "many a yarn about her I've heard from Captain Miller of the *Samar*! Do you remember the race of those two ships to Australia?" This had been a notable event, and one of Captain Miller's favorite tales. The two were sailing together around the Horn for Sydney, and the skippers

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land, feeling that we had visited far horizons, to be hailed as follows: "Well, come up and tell me all about it! Why didn't you go aboard the Light? And what were you doing outside Number Three Ragged yesterday afternoon? Oh, basket star-fish, eh? Yes. You struck the sand-bar, entering there; you ought to know that place by now!" He knew just as much about the trip as we did.







started things by laying a substantial wager on the run. Others took it up and many bets were placed, aggregating a considerable sum, and making the keenest of rivalry between the crews. Both ships were driven hard throughout the voyage, and though they did not sight each other once, Captain Bartlett finally entered just seven hours ahead of *Samar*! Think how many trips to *Samar's* main-royal-yard must have been made by Captain Miller's binoculars to sweep the horizon for her rival — and now I owned also the spy-glass which had done the same thing on the *Annie H. Smith*! Many a time have I looked at the two and lived over again that stirring incident in the lives of two fine ships and fine sailors, in the "good old days of sail."



#### IV

#### FIRE ISLAND WINTER, 1872

THE "Fire Island Fever" continued, and after inspiring a number of cruises, it took me to the Dominy House for a fortnight's duck-shooting, late in the fall of 1872. I sailed in a small oyster-sloop belonging in South Bay, whose captain was finishing up the season by taking a load of coal to Blue Point. The wind was fresh southwest, with indications of a northwester, and it got so rough off Jones's Inlet that the skipper wanted badly to make harbor, but I persuaded him to keep on, fearing we should get frozen in and have to remain indefinitely. So on we went, crossing Fire Island bar mostly under water. By this time the wind had shifted as expected, and after landing me on the beach the sloop made Blue Point in short order. By night it was freezing hard, and next morning but little open water was to be seen in the Bay.

The Conklins were glad to see me, for aside from the lighthouse keepers and a man in charge of the Surf Hotel the beach was deserted. The fascination of the empty winter shore, its ice and gales, its wrecks, rescues and adventures, was very great, and as events turned out it was April before I saw home again. This winter proved to be the most severe in many years; Long Island Sound froze over, and drove all water traffic from the eastward to New York by way of the ocean and Sandy Hook for months at a time. There were occasions when I could have reached the mainland — in fact, did so — but the new experience so got hold of me that I wanted to see it out, and I have never regretted what my parents and home associates looked upon as a waste of time. The experience with cold, ice, snow and



surf, and escapes from disaster, hardened my body, and taught me things of the sea ever useful afterward.

The gunning for which I had gone was excellent, but the impossibility of getting any of the game either to home friends or to market soon ended it, except for our table, and for the feathers from an otherwise worthless variety of duck called "old squaw." To secure these we picked out strong northwesterners, which were of course very cold. About half an hour before sunset we concealed ourselves behind cakes of ice on the east point of the inlet and waited for the birds. They flew out to sea every night to roost or float on the warmer water, and for some reason the flight was invariably across this point. In the few minutes' wait the cold winter wind would nearly freeze us, so that as the first birds flew over it was most difficult with our numb fingers to fire and load our old muzzle-loaders. But presently off came gloves, overcoats, and if the flight were strong, even undercoats, and in our shirt sleeves we were overwarm with the violent exercise. It lasted only about twenty minutes, but the pile of birds, worth six cents apiece, was quite valuable.

Our first taste of real bad weather came with a heavy southeast gale beginning in the afternoon. By night the water had risen over all the low land, and we were busy with spare rope making fast everything that could float, while the roar of wind and sea was something to remember. Before morning it shifted to the westward and moderated. At daylight Fire Island Beach was mostly under water; only the beach hills and a few elevations remained above. A glance seaward showed enormous seas coaming for a half-mile offshore, and rushing over the beach inland between the dunes.

Nearly abreast of us, and in the center of one of these gullies stood a brig, the *Caroline Hall*, loaded with cotton, sails blown away, but otherwise intact, having come ashore at high water. Her crew was aboard and safe,





and at low tide she was completely dry; she was afterward gotten off uninjured.

Not so lucky was a bark which drove ashore some twenty miles east of us, loaded with Canton matting, preserved ginger and firecrackers. The crew was saved, but the vessel went to pieces and the cargo was strewn along the beach clear to the inlet; wagon-loads of it were carted to the house. The matting was utilized on the hotel rooms. The ginger, which was freely mixed with sand (the boxes having become unsoldered) was washed and redried, and sugared later on, when we were able to get the sugar. The firecrackers were excellent fuel for our stoves, and saved lots of hard work cutting wreckage for firewood; an occasional cracker would sputter a little, but the stove held together all right!

Soon after this another brig came ashore loaded with white-oak plank, bound from Norfolk, Virginia, to the Charlestown Navy Yard at Boston. This cargo was not so interesting at first, but the underwriters' agents soon began offering fair rewards for saving it.

The cold weather which started in so early finally closed all communication with the mainland except by occasional gunners reaching us with their scooters, a peculiar boat with sled-runners on the bottom, whereby they proceed over both water and ice, their only danger being getting into slush or thin ice, in which it was very difficult to make any progress. Late one night while we were playing dominoes, with the wind a gale northwest and freezing hard, I heard someone call; we listened, but the wind roared so that we laid it to that and went on with our game. Soon I heard it again, and this time grabbed hat and mittens and started out, the others following with a lantern. As I ran alongshore I again heard the cry and soon got abreast of it, finding one of the gunners in his scooter fast in the slush ice about forty or fifty feet offshore, and apparently exhausted. Procuring a rope from the house and wading in nearly to my shoul-



ders I managed to heave the line to him against the wind, and we soon had him ashore and in bed, with hot drinks. My good hearing was all that saved him.

Such nights as these the old Dominy House was none too comfortable. The one room, about eighteen feet square, in which we had a large cooking stove, could be kept passably warm with plenty of wood and firecrackers. Even so, one morning, being the first up, I built a roaring good fire, boiled a big pot of coffee, and then happening to look at the thermometer hanging some ten feet from the stove, found it at two degrees above zero! No wonder I had kept on my mittens and knitted hood, and later when the rest turned out we had breakfast in similar rigs. This may sound improbable, but the house was only clapboard, and the windows and doors were miserably loose, so that the gale then blowing swept right through. This was often the case, and many a night I went to bed, carrying a lantern, to find the matting or carpet all ballooning up from the floor, finally turning in with overcoat, mittens, hood and boots! Still, it was all fun in those days, and no one suffered with colds or sore throat all winter.

At this time there were no life-saving stations on Fire Island beach. The houses had been built the previous summer, but there was some delay about the crews, and they did not report for duty until very late; consequently I had the opportunity of seeing and participating in the old-time volunteer service. The boats and gear had arrived, but we were too shorthanded to make use of them, except on one occasion, when we succeeded in hauling the surf-boat over a mile through the sand, launched her on the inside of the inlet, and went to the rescue of the crew of a coal-laden sloop ashore on the outer bar, who were hanging on in the rigging. The sloop proved a good one, however, as before we reached her she had thumped her way across the bar, and as she did not leak seriously, the crew made sail and came in. So we missed the glory





of a rescue, but I had the satisfaction of serving in the first launching of a government lifeboat on that beach.

Previous to this time the only help afforded shipwrecked crews on these outlying and uninhabited places was by the Humane Society Houses, a private undertaking which had done much good on many occasions, but was of course inadequate on many more. These houses were placed ten miles apart, just back of the outer dunes, and furnished with cots, bedding, firewood in the stove and matches on top of it, lanterns, coffee, tea, biscuits and water. Directions for obtaining the nearest help, etc., in several languages, were posted on the wall and outside the door, and at intervals of a mile, just on the crest of the beach, were guideposts to the houses. There was a keeper to each but he was not expected to reside there, and usually lived six or ten miles away on the mainland. How faithless some of these men were was shown by the wreck of the *Allan Middleton*, Captain Davis, of Warren, Rhode Island, which happened this same winter.

One evening just before dark, a heavy gale blowing from west-northwest, and freezing hard, we noticed a schooner scudding to the eastward under bare poles, but as the wind was slightly offshore, thought nothing further of it, though a big sea was running. A few minutes after daylight we were awakened by a banging on the door, and found one of the keepers of the light — Hulse, I think, by name. He reported that from the tower they could see a schooner ashore about six miles to the eastward, with the crew lashed in the rigging.

A few minutes sufficed to get into our clothes and swallow some coffee and food. Grabbing my oilers and mittens, I started on a run down the beach, leaving the others to follow in the wagon, in which they had placed blankets, provisions and whiskey. I easily outran that conveyance, and arrived at the wreck a long ways ahead, warm as could be, while they nearly froze. Long





before reaching her I saw that what the keeper had taken for the crew in the rigging was only the remains of sails. The hull, except the to'gallant fo'castle, bowsprit and jibboom, was under water, resting on the outer bar some fifty yards from the beach, while everything above water was heavily coated with ice.

There was no sign of the crew, and I had started to look farther alongshore for them when, taking another look at the jibboom, I saw a man's foot sticking out of the flying jib. As there was a possibility of his being alive, and maybe others under the deck forward of the bitts, the thing to do was to get aboard at once. With no boat the outlook was doubtful, especially as the sea was still heavy. Low tide favored me, however, and I now had a thorough knowledge of beaches, with their innerchannels, and the cuts through the outer bar called sea-pusses, in which flows the dangerous so-called undertow, and this enabled me to select a suitable place to wade the channel.

I succeeded without losing my foothold, and once on the bar was soon in the vessel's forechains and aboard of her. My clothing immediately freezing kept me comparatively warm, and I proceeded to investigate the flying jib, there being no other sign of life. The projecting foot, encased in a Congress gaiter shoe, with the enveloping sail, was heavily covered with ice. There was nothing to work with except a belaying pin which I managed to work out of the rail with much kicking, and my jack-knife, extracted with equal difficulty from my frozen pocket.

The rest of the party having by this time arrived, Hulse started out to help, but not being quite so lucky in keeping a foothold in the channel, had to swim for it. He succeeded in reaching me all the same, and together we cut and hacked the man clear of the sail; he was frozen hard, and had been dead for hours.

While at this work, which took some time, the tide had been rising rapidly, and when we were ready to go



ashore that channel looked far from inviting. Then, opportunely, we saw a crowd of men coming up the beach with a boat on a wagon — wreckers from the mainland who saw the vessel's spars and had just gotten across the frozen South Bay. Their arrival was timely and we were soon taken ashore. With them was Captain Davis of the wrecked schooner, whose story of the previous night's hardships was soon told. Of his own heroic devotion to the poor man we had found in the sail he said nothing, but another of the crew told it to me afterward. It ran as follows:

At sundown the vessel was off Fire Island Inlet, and not wishing to reach Montauk Point before daylight, they took in nearly all sail, the wind being slightly offshore. Having finished this job the crew went below, with the exception of the man at the wheel, and had not had time to remove their heavy clothing (fortunately for them) when the vessel struck. The second or third sea stove in the stern and flooded her, driving the crew on deck, whence the settling of the craft and the rising tide soon drove them out on the flying jibboom. The cook, who had not been on deck taking in sail, had no time to secure extra clothing, and soon began to suffer from extreme cold and flying spray. The others did all they could to keep up his courage, the Captain taking off his own coat and mittens and putting them on the poor chap, but it was no use, and as a last resort they furled him into the flying jib, where I found him.

About midnight they were suffering so that something had to be done, and judging that it was about low water, one of the men let go his hold, and dropped, hoping to wash up on the beach. In this he was successful, and calling to the others, they did the same, but their suffering was little relieved, unless they could find shelter. Thinking of the Humane Society's houses, they began a search, and soon located one, only to be bitterly disappointed at finding it devoid of fuel, matches or food. It





had been robbed by some scum of the earth, and the keeper had not inspected or replenished it!

As they had to keep moving or die, they started west toward the lighthouse, and at the end of a couple of miles nearly all had succumbed and fallen. The Captain, however, coatless and mittenless, still in the lead, kept on until he heard the crowing of a rooster back of the sand-hills, and stumbling through the snow and grass, saw the fish factories. Finding a dwelling close by he managed to bang on the door, and then gave up.

Old Mike and his wife, keepers of the place, were fortunately in this building, and heard the knock. When he opened the door, the senseless body of the Captain fell inside. Guessing at once what had happened, he hurried on his clothes, called his wife to care for the Captain, took a lantern, and started out to find the others by following the trail in the snow. In an hour or so he had carried them all on his back, one by one, to the house, where everything possible was done toward restoration. They all lived, but many lost hands, fingers or feet, the Captain alone escaping, notwithstanding his scanty clothing. It seems as though Providence looked after him especially, as a reward for his unselfish act toward the poor cook; but his splendid physique and great courage were likely the real reason. The story shows up by contrast the splendid life-saving service of today. It is doubtful if that crew would have suffered at all under present management, for it was really an easy job of rescue for modern appliances.

As the winter progressed our larder got low; there was plenty of game and codfish, and field-corn from a schooner frozen in down by the inlet, but no flour, sugar, tea, coffee or pork, the treacherous nature of the ice on the bay preventing our crossing without much danger. In this emergency I put on my skates one day, and proceeding alongshore about twelve miles, happened to meet Captain Dan Newins, keeper of the Blue Point Station on the





outer beach, returning to Patchogue on his ice-boat. At this distant point from the inlet the ice was in better shape, and the run across, with half a gale from the westward, was made in about five minutes — a distance of four miles! This was my first experience of an ice-boat, and was highly exciting, especially as there were patches of partly frozen water from a recent rain, which pelted us like shot as it was thrown up by the flying runners.

Captain Dan kept me overnight, and next morning took me toward the inlet as far as the ice permitted, towing an old hand-sled loaded with provisions. Here, some four miles from home, I intended leaving my load with Mike, to bring the next day with the horse, but the old man insisted that if I would let him adjust it on my back in a sack, old-country fashion, I could easily carry it and not feel the weight — about two hundred pounds. So after supper I started along the smooth frozen beach, just above the surf. The pack worked well, and I should have had no trouble, but washing about in the foam and shining in the moonlight I saw what I took to be a solid silver vase — too great a prize to abandon, and having once stooped to pick it up, I had a hard time rising again to proceed! It looked as though I would have to stay down in the wet and get rid of my pack, but finally I succeeded, and carried home my prize in frozen mittens. In the lamplight it proved to be one of those blown glass affairs, silvered inside! It had most likely come from the *Allan Middleton*.

Two more trips were made to the mainland in a sail-boat. The first was to Babylon, where we heard that a friend had sent Steve Conklin a bag of buckwheat; this meant cakes, if we could get syrup and pork. We got there all right, but while Steve was uptown a westerly gale sprang up which started the ice alongshore and drove me slowly to the eastward. If Steve had not wasted time in taking sundry drinks all would have been well, but when he and the grocery wagon got back to where he



left me, I was half a mile away, with several creeks intervening. They had to gallop nearly a mile to find a bridge across the creeks, and when they reached the shore I was already driven past another creek, so back they had to go for another bridge! Once more this was repeated, and then Conklin's Point was reached, and there was nothing for Steve to do but wade the creek. He grabbed a jug of liquor instead of something useful, plunged into the ice and black mud, and just managed to reach me as I passed the point. Back we sailed to the Dominy House with nothing to show for our day's work but that jug, and Aunt Caroline being a strict prohibitionist, one may imagine Steve's curtain lecture that night; in fact, he was somewhat of an outcast with all of us for some time after.

Another time we got to Islip, got our stuff, and were about halfway back when a blizzard broke out, closing up the open water with old and new ice, and for a time it looked as though we were in for a night in an open boat with the thermometer below zero. By hard work and the fortunate opening of a lead to clear water we got out, and were soon home. This was a narrow escape, as I have always realized.

During the little spell of open weather when we made these attempts at reaching the mainland, the two assistant keepers of the Fire Island light had also gone, and had failed to get back the same day. This was previous to our Civil Service rules, and the keeper was a one-legged Irishman named Walsh who had been appointed on political grounds rather than for fitness. The position was much sought, and woe to the keeper if his light was not lit on the tick of sunset, or went out during the night! Walsh relied on one of his assistants for all mechanical details, and on this day of their absence he had foolishly taken the lamp apart for cleaning; about half an hour before lighting up he discovered that the big glass chimney and the sheet iron one were out of alignment. This was easy to correct with the three leveling screws under





the font, but losing his head, he attempted to bend the sheet-iron pipe, nearly wrecking it; then remembering that I was somewhat of a mechanic, he fairly jumped the whole of the iron stairway down the tower — 180 feet — and I can see him now coming along the beach with the sand flying from his crutch, one leg and a cane. I met him part way, and hurrying back ahead of him, had the lamp connected and ready for him to light just in time to save his billet.

He insisted that I spend the night with him for fear of other possible difficulties, as a hard southern gale had sprung up, and the other keepers could not return. By the time I got there the wind was already swaying that big brick tower, and before midnight it swung so as to partly stop the revolution of the lenses, and we had to help them around by hand. The sensation was not altogether pleasant for a novice; I was accustomed to swaying masts, but I missed the shrouds and stays! Walsh was afterward transferred to Robbins Reef Light in New York Harbor, where he committed suicide, probably by reason of some other mechanical indiscretion.

When not busy wrecking or gunning I got out the frame for a thirty-foot sailboat from the white-oak timber with which the beach was strewn — the cargo of the wrecked brig. It was set up, but I could not find thin enough stuff to plank it, and I do not know whether it was ever finished, for it was many years before I visited the place again.

On the breaking up of the ice, early in April, I returned home, much to my mother's relief, and after a severe cold, the first and only one of that season, went to work to make up for the long vacation. This strenuous holiday, in close touch with the stern and ruthless aspects of the winter sea, and in company with men whose lives were spent in circumventing it, had far-reaching effects. Love of the sea and boats was no less strong, but respect for the strength of the sea in its dark moods drove out any lin-





gering trace of "yachtish" or amateurish notions about boats, while admiration for the sturdy strength, sound character and devotion to duty of such men as Captain Davis, Conklin, Old Mike, the light-keepers and others who chose to winter on the coast, helped to establish sound ideals beyond all shaking. There was little danger of a boy who wintered at the Dominy House making an unworthy friend, or designing a boat which was not sturdy, sound and able.

Between times that spring I built a twenty-four foot sloop, the *E. B. Underhill*, named for an elderly friend who presented her with blocks and bunting. She proved both fast and able, and for several years gave much pleasure to the C. C. C.s of Clifton. Underhill was a friend of W. H. Vanderbilt, and one of his head brokers on the Stock Exchange; his partner was Samuel Barton, nephew of the old Commodore, also a friend of mine. Barton was afterwards a "Florida Pioneer," having a winter place at Palm Beach in the pre-railroad period.



## V

### FURTHER BUSINESS

IN 1874 a friend named William Andrews, a native of the Sandwich Islands, a neighbor on Staten Island, became interested in a wood-carving machine, and asked me to help him develop it. I spent the best part of a year with him in a shop on Center Street, New York, where we hired power and tried to find business. It was really a molding machine, cutting in relief and otherwise by means of spindle cutters — a common machine today, but at that time quite new. Its work was good, but we were evidently ahead of the time for such machinery, and after vainly trying to sell machines, we were forced to hunt jobs of carving to pay expenses.

For one thing, we built a handsome office desk to order. I applied all my knowledge of boat-building to its construction, and it was clinched and drift-bolted, scarphed and butt-jointed, fit to cross the Atlantic under sail, besides being profusely carved on our machine. Our knowledge of what constituted dry walnut boards, however, was surely deficient, for a few weeks in the steam-heated office made it of such an open-work or basket design that we expected to be arrested any day for fraud! The owners considered our good faith and said little.

We also made gross after gross of table book-stands for R. H. Macy & Co. and others, but finally Andrews threw up the sponge, told me to help myself to whatever tools I wanted in lieu of better pay, and let the sheriff take possession. The ratchet drill, hacksaw frame, and handvise now among my tools are souvenirs of this period.

The front room on the floor which we occupied was





let to a couple of very fine German machinists named Neuman, and when business was dull in the carving room I used to spend my time with the Neumans learning their trade in return for what I could do for them. They were experts, principally engaged in perfecting intricate patents, such as straw-hat sewing machines, so that my time with them was well spent.

When last I saw Billy Andrews, a few years ago, he was head of the steam-heating department of the George Westinghouse Co. in New York, so he finally "got there." His wife was a daughter of a former Turkish consul to New York and Oriental lecturer, Oscanyan, who was a neighbor of ours. Other neighbors at this time were Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect of Central Park and the National Capitol grounds, and John Appleton, the publisher, whose son Dan, long colonel of the 7th Regiment, National Guard of New York, was a schoolmate.

The next business venture, in 1875, was interesting. The Elmira Seamless Keg Co. had been making kegs by an unusual process, from a single piece of wood. Their machines cut short lengths of logs into concentric cylinders, which were finished and steamed, and then compressed onto two keg-heads and hooped at one operation, by means of large dies. The result was a beautiful keg, with sides of one solid piece of wood, which was in great demand, but the process involved cutting a wide variety of sizes, only one keg of each size coming from a log, so that it was impossible for them to concentrate on any one size. On this rock they came to grief, and the company failed.

A Dr. Smith conceived the idea of making such kegs from a continuous sheet of veneer cut from a revolving log, and at his suggestion I bought the compressors and dies of the Elmira Co. at junk prices. In the same way I acquired a heavy veneer cutter, built to make shingles, which had failed because of the tendency of the thick



slab to split. In company with J. H. Darlington of New York, a competent machinist, I spent nearly a year in perfecting this machine. We finally succeeded in cutting oak, walnut and sweet gum a third of an inch thick and equally sound on both sides by means of a steel roller to compress the steamed wood in front of the knife. This seems simple, but the difficulty of procuring knives thirty inches long that would stand cutting through knots under such pressure, and the scores of minor troubles, kept us busy through the year. Rotary cutters were added to finish the sheet at the proper width for any desired height of keg.

One problem was the delay in returning the cutter to its first position after cutting one log and before commencing another; the outward motion was as slow as the inward, so that it took as long to overhaul the machine as to cut a log. To better this Mr. Goodell, a famous mechanic (he would now be called a consulting engineer), was called in, and after half a day's study announced his solution, which involved a fortnight's time, and an outlay of \$250 or \$300. He then hurried to the noon boat for New York, leaving me very discontented with both cost and delay.

I at once called on Jim Burke, the engineer, to put the machine through its paces again while I watched and pondered. I stopped this in time for lunch before taking the one o'clock boat for New York, where I hurried to the shop of Darlington, who was to carry out Goodell's plan. Presenting a hasty sketch, I asked "Will this work?"

Darlington looked it over. "Sure it will."

"What will it cost?"

"Fifteen or twenty dollars."

"How long will it take?"

"Well, I can get these clutches from stock — no new shafting needed — you can have it day after tomorrow, noon."

Goodell received prompt word that his further services



were not required, and for many years after Darlington never saw me without chuckling over "beating the expert."

This accomplished I started in on the keg machinery, and another year or more was spent on this. At last we succeeded in handling a length of our rotary-cut sheet in the Elmira Co's dies and producing a similar keg, not "seamless" indeed, but with only two seams, and equally well finished. These could be turned out at the rate of ninety per hour. In the meantime I tried to find other uses for our new material, and our first customer was G. W. Banker, patentee of various packages for holding liquids. He had just patented a can covering made of rotary-cut veneers, and of course our solid-cut stuff made a much better article, so we were soon running full time on his orders.

Banker had formerly been in partnership with Charles Pratt, DeVoe, C. T. Reynolds, John Austen and others in the old "coal-oil" business — the distillation of bituminous coal into many products, including benzine, camphene and coal-oil, the latter intended to replace whale-oil and lard-oil in lamps; it was also called kerosene, and both names were later applied to the similar distillate of petroleum now common. I remember vividly, by the way, the first Dietz lanterns, and other patents, one of which was brought home in great glee by Mr. Austen and demonstrated in his yard in the evening. Among other stunts, he swung it over his head in circles, but as he did so, something let go, and the lantern flew far into the New York Yacht Club grounds next door, went out, and could not be found until morning — to his great disgust! The art of burning coal-oil developed slowly. The first success was with the French Argand burner, and the German "student lamp," both dependent on the supply from an elevated font, actuated by a simple valve device; the "fish-tail" burner was subsequently perfected. Pratt was the first of these men to realize the importance of





petroleum, and at the time of the patent kegs had built large refineries at Williamsburg, probably on the site of the old coal-oil refineries, in partnership with H. H. Rogers and others, and was working hard at the development of the world-wide trade which was later to be Standard Oil's.

Attempts to ship the oil in tin cans were discouraging, the making of such cans being a new business, but imperfectly understood, so that a large percentage of "case-oil" was lost by leakage. In these conditions the keg machine interested Pratt and Co., and they furnished capital for its development and the securing of patents, taking a two-thirds interest in the business. We then worked out a keg made of two  $\frac{1}{4}$ " layers, the inner one dipped in glue, which made a secure kerosene package, a test keg being shipped to Constantinople and back without losing a drop.

There was a mysterious snag in the way of the patents, however, and it eventually proved that an overtrusted friend had anticipated us by fraudulent claims of priority, which were finally adjudged perjury, and involved the credit of a well-known firm of patent lawyers in New York. The whole matter was settled quietly out of court, and never became public, while our friend had a long, successful and honored life.

So all difficulties were cleared away, and a good business seemed assured. But there was one defect of the kegs for shipping purposes — the loss of a fourth of the space in which they were stowed. During their development the making of tin cans had improved, and in the end the latter were adopted and the kegs abandoned, before their regular manufacture was begun. This was serious, but not fatal, for several other good customers were interested in the novel form of package, especially for spices and other dry contents, notably Mr. Douglass of the Hazard Powder Co. But Pratt, in accordance with what came to be known as Standard Oil tactics, did not



propose that the patents should benefit anybody but himself. His decree was that they should be locked up, and I was left to twiddle my thumbs!

As recompense I was finally offered a job in the Williamsburg refinery, but refused, being too disappointed at the squelching of what I had labored so long to accomplish to consider further association with Mr. Pratt. No doubt I missed chances in the business which later made so many great fortunes, but far from regretting this, my feeling was, "What an extremely lucky thing that I did not go along with Standard Oil. At best I would have been nothing but a money-grubber all my life."

As I was out of employment, my friend Underhill suggested that I build him a yacht. I have since admired his faith in my ability, for up to this time I had built nothing more than a 24-foot sailboat, and this was to be an out-and-out yacht, fifty feet long, to cost about \$5,000. I secured a good ship-carpenter and several ordinary mechanics, carved out a model, and started in; *Cyclone* proved a success, not for speed, but as a good comfortable cruiser. Her photo is in my collection.

This year, 1876, was chiefly remarkable for the holding, in Philadelphia, of the first really great exposition of the arts, sciences and manufactures in this country — the Centennial. I went to see it, but the weather was frightfully warm, the dust and crowds and poor facilities for handling people made the visit most uncomfortable, and I came away with a mixed and hazy idea of what I had seen. I have never attended any of the big shows since, thinking it best to take the great interests of life one at a time, where they can best be studied, for which there is always opportunity if we take the trouble to hunt it.

One item alone of the Philadelphia show remains before me. As I write this now on the Florida shore, the evening sun shines on the white inner column of Fowey Rock lighthouse, fourteen miles away on the outer reef,





and I am reminded that this lighthouse, made that year, was set up in Philadelphia as an exhibit before it was shipped south.

While the keg business was in progress I had frequently noticed an old gentleman about the waterfront who seemed interested in our business and also in boating matters. I made it pleasant for him in little ways, and finally asked him to go for a day's fishing with me. His name was Thomas Hewitt, but beyond that I knew nothing. An early hour was set for the next morning, and at his suggestion we compared watches; he was on time to the minute, and so was I. Several years later he became my father-in-law, and then told me that my punctuality had made him my friend.

He turned out to be a brother of Abram S. Hewitt, son-in-law of Peter Cooper, an able and upright man who will be long remembered. Thomas was the same, and after a long life of mining and railroad work in connection with Cooper, Hewitt & Co. he had retired to Staten Island. Through this friendship my circle of acquaintances was largely increased and among the best stock of the country. Keep your appointments to the minute if possible!

One of Mr. Hewitt's sons, Charles, was a cadet at West Point at this time, and I conceived the idea of giving him and his chums an evening's entertainment. Mr. Underhill kindly lent me the *Cyclone* and with Mrs. Hewitt's help her lockers were filled with everything good to eat and drink, and we sailed up to the Point. After making the tour of the grounds and watching the drills we arranged with Charley for the evening's fun and went aboard. Dropping a little way down the river and close to the bank, we waited for taps to sound and a few minutes later I rowed ashore with all the oil-coats, overalls and spare clothing we could muster. Charley soon appeared, closely followed by his chums, one at a time, and putting the clothes over their uniforms, I soon



had them aboard, making several trips, and not being disturbed. They certainly had a jolly time, and an hour or so before daylight managed to get back into quarters without getting caught.

That they were expert at this work was shown the following New Year, when the same boys smuggled enough powder from New York into the Academy buildings to fire twenty-one guns from the big siege battery at midnight, the guards being diverted by a Roman-candle bombardment by the plotting allies. They got back into barracks without being caught — an Academy escapade never equaled before or since. One of Charley's chums at West Point was General Goethals, of Panama Canal fame; he was a leader in this affair. In appreciation of my part in the night-lark on the Hudson, a photograph of the reunion of this class of 1880, in celebration of their forty-fifth anniversary, was sent me by Charles Hewitt, shortly after it was made at West Point.



## VI

### FLORIDA

THE failure of the keg business rather heightened the attractions of the sea, and they now became more and more pervaded by the tropics, from the fascinating tales current in the office of the Coast Wrecking Co. (afterward Merritt & Chapman). Their work covered almost the Seven Seas, then as later, and their employees in odd moments delighted to swap yarns of storms and wrecks and salvage.

About this time their steamer *Amanda Winants* returned from a winter's work on the Florida Reef with a full cargo of yarns and wreck material gathered from the reefs, and her crew were mainly Staten Islanders. With them was Ned Pent of Biscayne Bay, employed by the company as pilot. Their stories of that mysterious, remote and legend-haunted region were wholly fascinating. The last of the pirates had haunted the Reef and the near-by keys down to the middle of the century and the wreckers that followed were their blood brothers, according to many awe-inspiring tales of high-handed and ruthless activities. On blustery winter evenings such tales, set in a scene of warm and brilliant sunlight, on blue waters lapping green islands and covering coral reefs, had all the magic charm and romantic appeal that Melville gave to the Marquesas, and they soon began to center my vague longings for the tropics among the Florida Reefs.

Another incident of February, 1874, had the same effect. One stormy morning, with a freezing gale from the northeast, on looking from my bedroom window my wrecking instinct was aroused by the sight of a small sloop-yacht pounding on a sunken crib-work, while her crew of three stood helpless on her deck. Half-dressed as





I was, not even stopping for an overcoat, I rushed to the breakwater, got a boat and a helper, and with a half-hour's hard work got the sloop afloat and into shelter.

Her owner was William B. Brickell, bound to Biscayne Bay with merchandise for his Indian trading store on the Miami River. His descriptions of the Bay and its possibilities fanned my suppressed yearnings into a smart blaze, and when he finally stated that a piece of land and pineapple slips enough to plant it were mine for the asking, as a partial acknowledgment of the morning's services to him, the die was cast.

Brickell had just bought the boat, was not much of a sailor, and knew nothing of winter conditions on the coast, so I advised shipment of boat and cargo to Key West. Next morning he was gone, and in the afternoon we had a gale from the northwest. Happening to be on South Street in New York a week later, my attention was attracted by a schooner at the end of a pier, evidently taking on board some heavy weight. This turned out to be Mr. Brickell's boat, being loaded on a schooner bound for Key West. The gale had put him ashore on the inside of Sandy Hook where the boat was quickly filled with water and sand, and he had concluded that my advice was sound. Lucky for him that he did not get to sea, to be blown offshore and probably never heard of!

This boat was the *Ada*, built in 1872 for Captain Bieling at Greenport, New York. She was an able boat of eleven tons, long familiar to Biscayne Bay, where she played a prominent part in the fortunes of the Brickells. Many a tax-bill which threatened their lands was met by a turtling-trip on *Ada*, manned by his sons Will and Charles, and his daughter Edith.

Brickell had a picturesque history, which lost no color in the telling. Some of his yarns were extraordinary, and at times doubted by many. He had had strange experiences, and his vivid and colorful imagination, a natural



part of the temperament which enjoyed such a life, could not resist dramatic exaggeration.

Born in Cleveland, he studied law; in 1849 he went to California and became law partner of the famous Judge Lynch. Thence he drifted across the South Seas and finally to Japan, where it is stated he became an adviser and friend of the Mikado. I was frequently told of a barrel of fine wine given him there, and offered a glass of it; but it never materialized. Next he tried the Australian mines, and there met his second wife, a capable and energetic Englishwoman. Eventually wholesome climate and cheap land drew him to Florida, in company with a Mr. Sturtevant, also of Cleveland, whose daughter, Mrs. Julia Tuttle, afterward owned the land north of the river which became the site of Miami as founded by Flagler. On the south bank Brickell and his seven children were all homesteaders, and beside these claims adjoining titles were bought as chance offered until he had considerable property.

These miles of waterfront, which were to be the finest part of Miami, remained in his hands until the railroad came and the town grew, and brought the family hundreds of times the wealth that their wildest dreams could have suggested in the early days. One may remark the evidence of sound character and judgment in the Brickells in that neither the labors and hardships of wilderness poverty nor the sudden flood of riches which followed could disturb their industrious, cheerful, well-ordered lives, which still wholesomely proceed much as they began.

The rescue of *Ada* and the talks with Brickell localized my tropical longings on Biscayne Bay, which was within reach of reasonable hopes. At the same time the murder of a good business just as it had proved its success brought a resurging love of the sea, and put me in proper frame of mind to seize the opportunity which came in August of 1877. John Demarest of Chicago, son-in-law of Mr. Hew-





itt, was ordered south by his doctor and wanted a companion. He had the current Florida literature of Sidney Lanier and others, which dealt with St. Augustine, the St. John's, and Cedar Keys, to which place ran the only railroad south of Jacksonville. The peninsula was nothing more than a vague wilderness. To me, however, there was no appeal short of Biscayne Bay.

"Never heard of it," said Demarest. "It isn't on the maps, and can't be of any importance."

"There or nowhere," I replied, in effect, and there we went.

As to route, we might go by rail to Cedar Keys, and take the occasional steamer thence to Key West, or there were weekly Mallory boats direct from New York. There was also the Benner Line which ran schooners to Key West, and Mr. Benner was our neighbor. A fine boat was nearly due to sail, and would take us by the "Hole in the Wall" and across the Bahama Banks. White canvas! The Gulf Stream! The Bahamas! It was the fulfillment of dreams, and you can guess which route we took. There were to be many more southern voyages for me, but none of the others had the joyous thrills of this, not merely as the first, but because it was under sail, and by a most picturesque route.

The boat was a fine Maine schooner of 250 tons, the *Lena R. Storer*, Captain Seavey. At 4:30 in the afternoon of Monday, September 3, 1877, she was towed into the stream and set sail to a fresh west-northwest breeze. It was the season for hurricanes in the West Indies, but that meant nothing to us, and not much more to Captain Seavey, who had not experienced one, and had not been in the Florida Straits. "Where ignorance is bliss —" at any rate we were free of the anxiety we might legitimately have felt, and ready to enjoy the voyage.

It was a comfortable one, and I can still feel the thirsty fibers of my being drinking in the world of sea and sky, long dreamed of, yet new. On Wednesday we sighted a



ship, a brig and several schooners and were boarded by a boat from a Provincetown whaler, short of news and tobacco. They had had no news of consequence since sailing, and were certainly rough-looking specimens of the human race, mostly Portuguese, sunburnt and unshaven. If the tattered and greasy patches of clothing had been left off, I think they would have made passably good-looking and interesting savages; as it was, they were disappointing, and had little in common with the old Yankee whalers I had known.

Moderate weather yielded to a westerly squall, and then a fine northeast breeze set us well across the Gulf Stream, its indigo rollers flashing in the sun like great beds of sapphire, alive with the silver gleam of flying fish. Monday was calm, with a heavy sea, and the main-sheet block parted company with the boom under the violent slatting of the sail.

There followed a strenuous time, the boom sweeping wildly to and fro and threatening the backstays, while the whole crew tried to pass rope's ends around it as it swung. It was secured at last without damage, and that evening we had a good assortment of yarns about similar experiences.

There were good breezes Tuesday and Wednesday, and Captain Seavey announced Abaco Light due in sight at one o'clock Thursday morning. At 1:15 it appeared — a remarkably good landfall — and at 7:00 we passed the Hole in the Wall, and had a good look through it. It is an opening in the narrow, wall-like cliff of stone on the south end of Abaco Island, which has given its name to the whole neighborhood, and in fact to this route into the Gulf of Mexico.

We were soon in the Northwest Providence Channel, and at 3:00 P.M. hove to off Stirrup Cay to land a passenger bound for Nassau. Some sea was running, which made trouble for the boat's crew, and I watched from the masthead with some little apprehension for them, but



they finally found a smooth place, and were back again in about an hour.

We then took a southwest by south course across the Great Bahama Bank, with the bottom plainly in sight for the next hundred miles. Just before dark, with no land in sight, we were boarded by two negroes in an open boat with fish, sponge and shells for sale, or rather to trade for salt beef, to make them strong; as they said, "Money no use, no place to spend it." One of these men was close to seven feet in height, and very humorous in his remarks. Without compass or charts these chaps navigate all over the Bahamas and seldom go astray except in bad weather.

We had a beautiful moonlight night and fair wind, and at nine in the morning passed Orange Cay, and were soon off soundings in the Straits of Florida. Daylight on the fifteenth found us within sight of the Double-headed Shot Cays, on Salt Cay Bank, with light wind and strong current ahead. Soon after, a squall from the east, accompanied by a whirlwind, passed close astern, and occasioned great activity for a few minutes in clewing up and taking in sail.

Afterward the wind was so light that we drifted backward many miles with the Gulf Stream current, and this brought out the story of the Maine skipper with a load of ice for Havana, who had come just our course and to this location when the wind failed entirely and he drifted back to the north of Matanilla Reef. Here he got a breeze, started around Abaco again and once more reached Salt Cay Bank only to drift back to Matanilla. A third time he tried it, but by this time his ice was nearly gone, and when the wind once more failed and he couldn't anchor, he jumped overboard and ended the fight!

The *Storer* was more fortunate, crossing the Stream Saturday night, and sighting the lights of Key West Sunday evening. Captain Seavey had some misgivings about entering the new harbor in this strange land of clear water and coral, with the bottom everywhere ap-





parently threatening, but the simple sailing directions, "Key West Light under the north star," brought us to anchorage.

And here, at last, was Florida; here the Gulf Stream, the coral reefs, the exotic island town under the moon. The glint of moonlight on pinnated palm leaves, waving in the fresh breeze, and on ruffled waters, the occasional clear flutelike note of some fish under the vessel's bottom, and the almost ceaseless thrumming of guitars with tomtom accompaniment from the negro quarter, and the calling of the dance in varied voices, mingled with the inexpressible odors of a tropical town — fruit, fish, flowers, tobacco and wood-smoke — the barking of dogs, the crowing of roosters and the splashing of fish, taken all together, made an impression both weird and delightful, and never to be forgotten.

Today a whiff of buttonwood smoke, the savage beat of "jazz" dance music, or the strange piping fish, still irresistibly recall that first touch with Key West. The piping fish, by the way, remained for many years unidentified, and became the characteristic voice of quiet nights in lonely Florida anchorages; not until 1908 did I trace the music to the common spotted toadfish.

Next morning at the post office, who should appear but Mr. Brickell, who was pleased to see us, and suggested that we go to Biscayne Bay in the *Ada*, saying that his rates were no higher than those of the mail schooner. Nothing further was said of her rescue off Staten Island three years previous, nor of the pineapple land offered, but one can scarcely blame the struggling settlers of the then unproductive land for looking very keenly at a dollar.

Key West at this time was quite a prosperous town. There were many educated and cultured Americans, who filled the official positions, about as many Bahama Islanders in the sponge and key-pineapple business and a large number of Cubans engaged in cigar-making. The



first two nationalities were also largely interested in wrecking, as owners and crews. Every key plantation had its wrecking vessel, and every sponger was ready for the business at a few minutes' notice. There were on Key West three lofty wooden towers, built for the purpose of sighting incoming and passing vessels, as well as wrecks.

Speaking of wrecks, we chanced in Key West on the solution of an ocean mystery recently called to our attention. As we crossed the Bahama Banks Captain Seavey told us of a schooner that sailed from Philadelphia just a year before, in command of a friend of his. She was caught in the first of the two 1876 hurricanes and anchored on the Bahama Banks, but parted her cables; she lived, and put in at Savannah for new anchors, but that was the last ever heard of her. While looking around Key West wharves the day after our arrival I came across a large pile of railroad iron, very rusty and covered with coral. A bystander told me it had been picked up in the channel near the Western Dry Rocks, at the entrance to Key West Harbor. Nothing more was known of it, save that a few pieces of wreckage, including a pin-rail, had also been found on the south beach.

He was one of the salvors, and was very anxious to know whether the iron was domestic or foreign, as the question of duty would come up in a few days at the marshal's sale. They had been scraping the rails for signs of makers' marks, which seemed obliterated. It occurred to me at once that perhaps I could help, so I sent for muriatic acid which was diluted and applied to the ends and center of a rail, on its side, and shortly had the marks quite visible — "Phoenix" — showing it to be a product of Pennsylvania. The man was pleased and I thought nothing further of it until that evening on board the *Storer* when I mentioned the incident to Captain Seavey. He at once became interested, and said that the missing schooner had been loaded with rails for Galveston. Next morning he hunted up the pin-rail and was





able to identify it by some peculiarity, and so unveiled the fate of his friend and the schooner. Undoubtedly running for harbor in the height of the second gale the vessel struck the reef, rolled over, spilled out the iron and then drifted out into the Stream with the shift of wind, never to be seen again.

We sailed on *Ada* next day (September 19) and had a slow, warm run to Bamboo Key anchorage. How can I describe the eager delight with which I saw that lonely archipelago unfold its novelty and beauty before us? The shoal clear water, through which coral reefs and bottom growths were visible, the bland warmth of the breeze, the sparkle and brilliance of the sun in the clear air, all made a beautiful setting for the novel scene in which, one after another, the low, green, mysterious islands rose, passed and disappeared astern. They were mostly uninhabited then, and only rarely visited — known, in fact, only to the wandering spongers. All that I knew of them was from tales of pirate and wrecker, and for me it was the scene of such romantic yarns that *Ada* was traversing. We had a slow and not too comfortable journey on her — a very different one from that taken now by so many hundreds daily on the train, but infinitely superior in thrills. Corals, palms, trade wind, lonely islands, wreckers — all was but the astonishing fulfillment of long dreams. On the twentieth we parted the centerboard pennant and put in at the Hurricane Harbor at the west end of Lower Matecumbe for repairs. The weather not suiting Mr. Brickell, we remained there, getting a squall at sundown and calm the rest of the night, with our first experience of Florida mosquitoes. Having no nets Demarest and I did not get a wink of sleep.

On the twenty-first we called at Indian Key, site of the first town in the keys. This was of especial interest since it had been developed by a Staten Island man, Jacob Houseman, shipbuilder, wrecker and trader. It is best



remembered for the spectacular Indian attack of 1840, in which the town was burned and many people killed, among them Dr. Henry Perrine, who was also of a Staten Island family.

As a boy I had often been entertained by some of the Staten Island oystermen from the north shore with stories of the mysterious arrivals of schooners at Mariner's Harbor, their unloading at night and immediate departure, and of the sudden evidences of wealth in some of the longshore families. When I learned the history of Indian Key, these yarns came back, and it looked as if they were not all children of the imagination, for the key had been for many years a rendezvous for wreckers, and was of more importance than Key West. That wrecking in those days verged closely on piracy is well known, and where over three score vessels sailed in opposite directions each day with lookouts at every masthead, it was natural that the competition should result in illegal practices. Fast craft were in demand for this trade, and among them were several old-fashioned but fleet North River sloops, with immense mainsails. These unwieldy boats made many successful voyages in the West Indies, to the Mediterranean and even around the Horn.

Carysfort, which we next passed, is one of the most interesting parts of the two-hundred-mile barrier reef. Its wide area of shoal ground, covered with partly submerged rocks and coral, is a never-ending delight to the naturalist. It was formerly marked by a lightship, but this was replaced in 1852 by an iron-pile skeleton-tower — the first of its kind to be erected.

Soon after this we entered Biscayne Bay through Cæsar's Creek, a long and winding channel, running first through a submerged bank three miles wide, then between a number of beautifully wooded islands, and finally branching into several entrances to the foot of the Bay. Here we were again invested with the spirit of



piracy, for this was the stronghold of Black Cæsar, a giant negro, who took toll from passing vessels along the reef until patience ceased among underwriters and owners, and a full-fledged naval expedition under Jackson's administration put an end to his operations. He escaped, and was said to have been killed at last by a woman when boarding a vessel in the Gulf of Mexico. His location here was certainly admirable for the trade, protected on the outside by shoals and blind-mouthed channels. When he was too hotly pursued, mazes of deep channels inside, heavily bordered with mangroves, enabled him to dismast and sink his craft and so lie secure from observation until the fuss blew over.

Cæsar's Rock, a small island about the middle of the creek, was reputed to be the dwelling place and shipyard of the pirate. It was afterwards bought by my friends the Hines, and we explored it on many occasions, looking for buried treasure, but finding nothing more than rusty iron.

Passing Soldier Key, halfway up the Bay, we could see the United States Engineers' office, barracks and workshop for the construction of Fowey Rock light tower, four miles distant on the Reef. The work had progressed only to the lower platform; the upper tower and lantern were those I had seen exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial the year before. A wooden working platform, on iron-shod piling, was first erected with some difficulty, after which the permanent ironwork was more easily put in place, though the driving of the big iron piles was necessarily a tedious job.

While at this work the men were startled one dark night by seeing a steamer almost aboard of them — if there had been more water on the reef there might have been a collision! She was the *Arakanapka*, and what is left of her can still be seen at low water, a few yards northeast of the tower. Before the light was finished another steamer, the *Carondelet*, with general cargo, almost poked her nose into the tower but was more fortunate in getting





afloat again a few days after, though she left most of her cargo for the benefit of the people of the bay, who were out, of course, in anything that would float. These two incidents at least show that the Fowey Rock light was needed.

By noon we had arrived at the Miami River, and Mr. Brickell's descriptions this time had not been overdrawn. It was a beautiful clear-water stream, its banks lined with towering coco-palms and mangroves. The Brickells had a plain, substantial, two-story wooden house, a short distance back from the river, one room being used as a store. Near by was a small storehouse, and on the bank a wharf at which *Ada* was kept. Our first night ashore passed very comfortably, as did, in fact, all others at this place. It was cool, with very few insects; our food was good and the family agreeable. A pleasant time seemed in prospect, and so it turned out.

So entered Biscayne Bay one who was to know it more intimately and love it better, probably, than any of its future hordes of settlers and visitors. The beauties and possibilities of the country appealed to me at once strongly. No sea-lover could look unmoved on the blue rollers of the Gulf Stream and the crystal-clear waters of the Reef, of every delicate shade of blue and green, and tinged with every color of the spectrum from the fantastically rich growths on the bottom, visible to the last detail through this incredibly translucent medium. It scarcely resembles northern sea-water at all — a cold, semi-opaque, grayish-green fluid, which hides the mysteries of the bottom. Drifting over the Florida Reef on a quiet day one may note all the details of its tropical luxuriance twenty feet below, and feels himself afloat on a sort of liquid light, rather than water, so limpid and brilliant is it.

This Reef life is truly tropical, for the water in the Gulf Stream comes by the shortest route from the Windward Islands, bringing its color, its warmth and its teeming



life with it. This makes the Florida keys the only approach to tropical land and climate in the United States, with a wholly different vegetation from most of the peninsula.

Here, too, is the western limit of the trade wind, wafting the pure dry breath of the Bahamas across hundreds of miles of shoal banks and palm-fringed desert islands, to be further warmed by the Gulf Stream, and finally to caress Biscayne Bay and the keys with an incomparable touch, warm yet invigorating, pure and dry, constant day and night. An ideal sailing wind, always fresh but seldom stormy, it strikes the keynote of Biscayne Bay weather during a great part of the year, and makes the region a yachtsman's paradise.

So to the explorer and sailor it was all pure delight, although to the settler trying to make a living there might be disadvantages. Yet even the basic problems of the homesteaders — food and clothing — were much simplified by the bountiful fish and game, and by the warmth which permitted clothes to be reduced to the minimum of decency.





## VII

### NOTES ON FLORIDA CLIMATE

A FEW words on Florida climate in the light of my long experience seem called for here. When Florida first dawned on the horizon of the north as a refuge from winter, the exploring enthusiasts returned from its wild forests, rivers and beaches with extravagant tales of paradisaic climate. Frost was unknown in the state, gorgeous tropical flowers vied with strange fruits and incredible hordes of game and fish, to make up a veritable fairyland of wonders, beauties and delights, all basking in perpetual sunlight, and breathed upon by the perfumed, languorous trade wind.

It was a wonderful picture, one result of which was a generation of the most bare-faced real estate frauds known to this blue-sky country. Throughout the following fifty years one bubble after another has burst, sometimes absurdly, sometimes tragically, down to the Miami hurricane of September, 1926, until one might be pardoned for asking if there were anything but lies in the oft-sung praises of the state.

As a matter of fact, there was very little untruth. Fifty years ago frost *was* unknown in Jacksonville, and had been for a generation, and the country around it was bowered in orange groves; the scarlet flamingo, the roseate spoonbill, hordes of brilliant parrakeets and uncounted millions of egrets and other plume-birds gave a marked tropical effect to the incredibly crowded mass of bird-life, and made the whole peninsula an ornithologist's dream; while not even a feverish imagination could exaggerate the size, number and variety of game and food fish which filled its varied waters almost to overflowing, and leaped at the crudest lure with savage



ferocity. Panthers were still to be found, wild turkeys were plentiful, deer numerous, alligators and crocodiles of huge size filled every river and lagoon, green turtle swarmed on the southern beaches and shoal-water feeding grounds, and the cumbersome manatee was common.

As usual, tourists took it for granted that these conditions were permanent, and not to be affected by their puny efforts at shooting and fishing. Each St. John's River steamer carried a circle of "sportsmen" on her forward upper deck, armed with the latest repeating rifles, and popping away at every alligator that showed his nose. Every cruiser collected bird-skins and the height of his ambition was to take home as many spoonbills, flamingos and other rarities as he could get. Plume hunters annually "shot out" the great rookeries of the south, killing literally millions of the dainty and harmless herons. The fish fared better for a time, for mere hook and line could hardly affect their numbers, but as markets became available the destructive net came in, and in the last generation it has done its fatal work among the shoal-water fish. At the same time the cruising purse-netters offshore have pretty well swept the sea clean of menhaden and other small school fish (for everything that comes to their net is oil and fertilizer to them and nothing more), and only recently are we coming to realize that these small fry were the food of the finer game fishes of the Reef, and that the latter, with the extinction of their food, visit us no more.

So now the big game is all gone, the brilliant birds are a half-forgotten memory, most of the shoal-water food fishes, including the luscious pompano, the sea trout, and to a certain extent the Spanish mackerel, are rarities, the delicious green turtle is only a tradition, the manatee is dying out, the crocodiles, once so common in the brackish waters of the southeast coast that I have seen twenty at a time in Indian Creek, at the present Miami Beach, are nearly forgotten — and so it goes.



It is of course the atmosphere — the flavor — of these old times which is of greatest significance in memory, and which is hardest to preserve and reproduce. The bare facts of my early years on Biscayne Bay are of small moment to anyone, but as I look back there is a color — a tone — a resonance — a life, in those days and their doings which is now unknown.

It is easy to say that we all see former years in rainbow colors, and that youth lives in a fairyland which is generally invisible to maturity. What I have in mind is a little more tangible and impersonal than this. In the first place, the "society" of a primitive wilderness community has always a tang, a reality, and usually a degree of kindly humanity, which are of necessity lost in a great winter resort region, or in any large center of population. Also, the actual physical air and water had then an unpolluted purity to which, alas, they may never hope to return. The air had never a smudge of man's making save an occasional forest or prairie fire, the blue smoke of which carried only fragrance and happy suggestions of camp and fireside, while now locomotive, factory and power-house chimneys pour out their wasteful and defiling soot, and in place of forest fires we have the bitter reek of burning peat from the ground fires in the drained Everglade lands. Meanwhile the sea itself is sadly polluted with tar and sludge pumped out of the oil-boats' ballast tanks as they enter the Gulf of Mexico through the Straits, so that it is sometimes impossible to step on the beach without miring yourself in clinging filth — one remote by-product of the huge new demand for gasoline and other forms of petroleum. I remember, too, that "colds" were practically unknown in the early days on the Bay, appearing only when imported by some recent visitor to Key West. We called them "Key West colds."

Throughout the same half-century we have been learning that the climate of Florida is a strange and





erratic blend of good and bad. Let me say at once that the good greatly predominates — so much so that throughout my residence at Coconut Grove, since 1887, I have constantly become a more faithful and enthusiastic lover of its clear air, warm sun and sparkling breezes, and that I should contemplate the necessity of moving my home to any other place as a calamity. But never throughout that time have I felt it was wise for myself, or fair to the state, to forget that there had been, and inevitably would be again, both frosts and destructive gales.

The great water masses in the Straits, the Gulf of Mexico and the Everglades combine to give the lower peninsula a more equable climate than its latitude would ensure, especially in view of the steady seventy-eight degrees temperature of the Gulf Stream. But the great storms that sweep down the Mississippi valley from the extreme west and northwest of the continent have always affected the Florida weather quite as much as the disturbances of the cyclonic area of the West Indies.

Thus from the beginning of the orange industry down to 1895 there was no frost heavy enough to injure the fruit as far north as Jacksonville, and the rapid development of groves went merrily on with the evident feeling that there never would be such a frost — in spite of the fact that many such were recorded in history. "Seeing is believing" and apparently *not-seeing* is disbelieving; when, in 1895, killing frost swept the state halfway down the Indian River, leaving a black flood of financial and industrial disaster behind it, the one thought of the state was to restore, to gloss over, to forget. Every cent of resources and credit, every ounce of energy, was thrown into the task of replanting — and then came the second freeze in 1897.

So the "frost-line" moved spasmodically down the state as drainage decreased the water area and apparently influenced the temperature. Palm Beach, Miami, the



Keys and at last Key West, had to cease claiming absolute immunity. There is an occasional brief period of freezing temperature throughout the state, and always will be, and only the blue-sky promoter will make other claims. It is rare and lasts but a part of one night as a rule, so that it is quite proper to call it "exceptional" and to say that it does not affect the delights of the climate to the visitor. None the less, it may be quite destructive to vegetation; truck gardens, fruit fields and orchards, coconuts and other trees are killed or stripped of foliage, and even native growth may suffer, for in 1897 many of the huge red-mangrove trees on the Indian River, probably at least a hundred years old, were killed.

In 1917 ice formed to a quarter-inch thickness on exposed water buckets in Coconut Grove, and this raid was accompanied by striking and pathetic evidence that even Mother Nature is caught napping at times. Our common barn-swallows go south in winter not for comfort, but for food, since they eat nothing but flying insects, and a touch of frost sweeps the air clear of this provender. Ordinarily a sudden cold snap simply means that they press on southward immediately, a few hours of their swift flight bringing them to warm foraging ground. In this case the cold wave must have moved very swiftly over a long distance. The day after the frost the whole bay-front was filled with circling, twittering swallows — thousands upon thousands, whirling, billowing masses of them, puzzled, searching, restless. That night the trees and roofs and boats were covered with solid masses of them, and next day again the sky was filled with their tiny, graceful, glancing forms, and their gentle, plaintive voices. Then we began to realize that they were searching for food and not finding it, and some of us tried to feed them crumbs, or other substitutes; but nothing was food to them save the live flies on the wing, and these were gone. Their strength began to fail,





and they roosted early, in the most sheltered spots they could find, for the air was still painfully cool. On the third day only a few of them rose from their perches; nearly all had succumbed during the night. The boats were covered with the pathetic bits of down, huddled into every nook which promised a trace of warmth, such as the iron sockets for the windlass-bars, and they had to be swept up, by the bushel, from the cornices and roofs of houses. Their little bodies were literally nothing but skin and bone; every shred of muscle had been used up in vain pursuit of their retreating food supply.

Perhaps when nature herself is so served by the erratic behavior of the elements, we should not be too hard on mere man for his miscalculations, yet it does seem absurd that the abundant records of frost in the state could not have been applied to the saving of the uncounted millions lost in the great orange freeze.

The same thing has happened, however, and will again, with regard to hurricanes, though their records were even more clear and vivid. Going back no further than the beginnings of Key West, it has always been perfectly well known that the young city, just coming into some importance through its adoption as a military and naval post in the Mexican War, was wiped out — smashed into kindlings — by the hurricane of 1846. Many disastrous blows followed, among which the notable one of 1876 came at an epochal moment, when the Reef lights were projected, some of them already constructed, and another (Fowey Rock) partly so. It flooded the keys and destroyed most of the houses, being accompanied by a severe freeze which killed millions of fish in the Bay and along the Reef. The records and even the memory of this storm, were available when the railroad came to Miami. A picturesque story of it could be told by Mr. J. W. Carey, who has been for some years Chairman of the Board of Dade County Commissioners. He and his fiancée, with several of the Frows and others, made up a picnic party to spend the



day at Soldier Key, and had just arrived when the storm broke. The government warehouses, barracks, etc., for the construction of Fowey Rock lighthouse were planned, but only the cisterns and foundations built. They found these walls the most stable anchorage to cling to, and lay on them all night, "head to wind," their hands grasping the edge of the stonework, while the storm stripped the key of trees, drove the breakers bodily over everything save their masonry perch, and bombarded them with a fierce fusillade of leaves, branches, coral, driftwood, shells and miscellaneous wreckage. It was a night which it is safe to say none of the party ever forgot — and there were no illusions in the minds of any of them as to the ferocity of a hurricane. It was this gale which left the schooner-load of iron rails on the rocks at Key West, as previously described.

Again in 1906, when the Key West line of railroad had been commenced but fortunately was not yet in operation, a hurricane flooded the keys, destroyed the houses and shipping, put a permanent close to the island pineapple industry, and should have carried a lesson to the whole region — but apparently did not. Much of the new embankments on the railroad were washed away, several huge "quarter-boats" were carried out to sea, and one river steamer, anchored behind Elliott's Key for shelter, was crushed and sunk by the backwash when the wind reversed, many men dying in the splintered woodwork or among the mangrove trees.

In spite of all this Miami, Miami Beach and the thousand "promotions" of the great boom which culminated in 1925, were planned and built in absolute disregard of even very recent history, just as though such a thing as a hurricane had never been suggested, much less experienced. Here and there a "pessimistic old-timer," like myself, raised a feeble note of warning, only to be branded a reactionary, and sublimely disregarded.

Well, the blow fell in September, 1926, and none who



saw that catastrophe will forget the possibility of hurricanes! Enthusiastic new settlers will crowd in, however, disbelieve the tales of the "old-timers" of 1926, and build the same fairweather houses that were so thoroughly crumpled that year, while the unscrupulous promoter will go on creating low "filled land" and building flimsy, showy houses thereon — "getting his money out" before the next gale strikes in.

There were twenty years between the last two destructive hurricanes — 1906 and 1926 — and everybody knows what eras of growth and development Miami passed through in that time. The vague tales of the "pioneers" of 1906 fell on deaf ears as crabbed ancient history, likely never to be repeated. Such is the strange mixture of doubt and credulity, rashness and overcaution, which is humanity.

Fortunately for Florida's winter visitors, the hurricanes are strictly summer products. The old sailors' doggerel had it:

June — too soon;  
July — stand by;  
August — look out you must;  
September — remember;  
October — all over.

And this is a fair working hypothesis, although Miami has suffered heavy blows in both June and October. Certainly it is safe to count on immunity from November to May, inclusive, and this covers the extreme outer limits of the tourist season, even including the late fishing. Frosts, on the other hand, are of course confined to winter, but they are so brief and mild that they need not affect the visitor's comfort, or pleasure, save by the occasional marring of foliage. To the truck farmer they are a more serious matter, since a few minutes in the vicinity of thirty-two degrees will destroy most of the fruits and vegetables. The farmer and business man (now often combined in one person) is not so apt to disregard his-





tory, and by smoke protection, planting immune crops, and seeking land protected from frost by large surrounding bodies of water, he is more and more insuring his interests against the cold.

Outside of frost and hurricanes there is little to mar the idyllic perfection of southeast coast weather. One unpleasant item is the "norther," a blow varying from a fresh breeze to half a gale, from the north, carrying with it the chill of the snow-clad Mississippi basin, and driving the mercury down into the forties. The typical norther commences one day, blows through the next and dies away on the third, but there is much variation. Only occasionally are they accompanied by frost, and do little harm, save to chill the fingers and delay the progress of any cruiser who happens to be northbound at the time.

Some part, at least, of the widespread ignorance about Florida storms is undoubtedly due to the interested reticence of speculators. The newspapers of the state said little about the big freeze of 1895 — that was left to outsiders — and anyone daring to predict a destructive hurricane in Miami was bitterly unpopular, as I discovered many times when my long experience and careful observation of weather conditions have caused statements and warnings which did not help to "boom" the town. Only lately I was called into court to testify as to the possible effect on existing properties of certain proposed dredge-filled islands in the Bay, in the event of a hurricane. Though all I said was based on history which is a matter of common knowledge, and might well have been cited by anyone interested, I was obviously disliked for even suggesting the chance of a hurricane — far more for describing its probable results. Nature arranged a most dramatic and disastrous confirmation of my predictions and suggestions. My own boathouse, which had withstood the blows of forty years, was completely destroyed and its contents scattered to the four winds, while my old trees, even the native ones in the hammock, were broken



down or uprooted, several small buildings were blown away and my house suffered from soaking with rain and salt water through blown-out windows.

Yet I still think this my ideal residence. I know that such blows, while always possible, are rare, and further, that it is perfectly feasible to build even small cottages in such a way that they will go through with only minor damage. The perfection of the good weather in south Florida, and its very great preponderance over the bad, leave the climate as nearly ideal for those who do not love ice and snow as anything in the United States. With intelligent recognition and proper planning neither frost nor hurricane need prevent or interrupt the resident's enjoyment of a wonderful outdoor life. My friend, Stephen C. Singleton, in his poem, "My Florida," has well expressed it:

My Florida — when from thy low-swung stars,  
Thy murmurous inlets and thy tide-swept bars  
I take reluctant leave, and in the fading light  
My spirit journeys forth upon an unknown flight,

Think ye I shall not seek here to return?  
Yes, — I shall strive in humbleness some way to earn  
A detail on some duty that shall bear me nigh  
Thy well-remembered shores, thy glorious cloud-flecked sky.

"Lord," I may reverently say, "this golden street  
Is beautiful; the songs the angels sing are sweet,  
But is there not some work that I can do  
Down where the gulls cry, over waters blue?

"I would not seem ungrateful, yet I pray,  
Let me go on some errand where the spray  
Of salt waves leaps and falls around some key;  
If there be work like that, I pray Thee, Lord, send me."





## VIII

### BISCAYNE BAY IN 1877

NOTHING, of course, suggested the future population of Biscayne Bay in 1877. No more isolated region was to be found in the country, and scarcely any less productive. The few hardy settlers depended mainly on the products of the sea, together with plentiful game, for food. Green turtle and fish of all kinds were unlimited, the Indians brought in venison, bear, wild turkey, terrapin, gopher (an edible land tortoise) and plenty of the finest "pumpkins" or rather squashes, and sweet potatoes similar to yams, but far better, and of huge size. Mr. Brickell told of one fifteen feet long, which had to be cut up with a bucksaw — but truth compels me to admit having had one from Elliott's Key which was so big that it was far easier to cut with a saw than a knife, and was further remarkable in having to be dug out of the hollows of the rock with a crowbar!

These conditions continued for at least fifteen years, during which the Indians made a regular business of market hunting, camping on the fresh water at the edge of the 'Glades, opposite the growing settlements from the Indian River to Coconut Grove, and selling game until demand was temporarily exhausted. In the same period any skillful white hunter was sure of deer, turkeys, occasional bear, and unlimited ducks in season. All these sold at reasonable prices, so that a little ready money enabled one to live better than can be done in these days at many times the cost. The chief lack was variety the year round, later supplied mainly by canned goods; these were just being introduced, principally meats.

The surest and easiest way of raising money was by the manufacture of coontie (or comptie) starch, from the



roots of a small palmlike plant (*Zamia*) which grew in the pine woods in crannies of the stubborn rocky surface. Many a bill of groceries at Key West was paid for by a barrel of the starch, which closely resembled arrowroot, and was in good demand.

Every family, except those of the two storekeepers, had its little mill — simple wooden cylinders, studded with shoemakers' heel-brads, running under a hopper by hand or horsepower. After grinding, the pulp was rallied in a tank and partly settled, and the starch-water was run off into other tanks for final settling. The starch was then dried in the sun on cloth-covered frames. Five barrels of roots made a barrel of starch on the average, which weighed about 250 lbs. and sold at 3 to 5 cents per pound. A man and helper would easily make 200 lbs. a week and not half work, so living was easy. Unfortunately the plant grew slowly and could not be cultivated, so it progressively disappeared, and there was no chance to develop a coontie industry.

Fish were plentiful and excellent food, but there was no means of getting them to market. Turtles, however, could be shipped alive, and the luscious "green" was so plentiful in the Bay that they could be seen in great numbers, feeding on the Coconut Grove flats at low tide.

The virtues of the soft limestone rock for citrous fruits remained long unsuspected, or rather unused, for I noted at once the fine orange trees, twenty-five feet high and loaded with fruit, on the banks of the river. Nothing could have been outwardly more forbidding than the "soil" of the pine woods, or even that of the hammocks, to northern eyes, the one being mainly rock, the other white sand, and the idea of planting trees in blasted holes in the rock, as fruit trees are now, would have been thought absurd. The one great asset of the region — its incomparable climate — could not lend its value to these wilderness acres without the transportation which was twenty years in the future, and was not



even suggested by anyone but the "visionary" Brickell. He would hold out his hand and say impressively, "Mr. *Monroe*" (he would have it *Mon*, strongly accented), "you will live to hear the whistle of the locomotive here," and though his prophecy was then received with incredulous smiles, I guess we have heard it, and so did he before his death.

The early history of the region is slight. Ponce de Leon, coasting southward in 1513, entered Biscayne Bay and got fresh water at the Miami River. Hearing from the Indians of the "Big Lake" (Okeechobec), he started thither in canoes but got no farther than the head of the river. Then, hearing of the Fountain of Youth at Bimini, in the Bahamas, he hastened off on that elusive quest. He left no mark of his visit to the Bay, nor is there record of any accomplishment by the Spaniards, who confined their works to the northern half of the peninsula. Key West, Cape Florida and a few other spots were granted to private holders, but practically no development followed, and in 1818 when the country came into the possession of the United States, it was almost as much a wilderness as in Ponce's time.

Our government's first concern was the navigation of the Straits. A brick lighthouse was built at Cape Florida which remained the only landmark for the north end of the reef until after my first visit in 1877. The Seminole Wars, which resulted from the greed and cruelty of the first American settlers, both discouraged and started settlements. No homesteaders could be protected in the vast wilds, but the "forts" or army camps were widely scattered and long maintained, and some of the soldiers and employees grew fond of the climate and stayed on as settlers after the war. It was during this period that Jacob Houseman bought and developed Indian Key.

Almost simultaneously with the attack on Indian Key, in 1840, the Indians ferociously attacked the Cape Florida light, driving the keeper and his allies into the





tower and then firing the wooden stairs. To escape roasting, the defenders lay on the narrow iron balcony around the lantern, then thirty-five feet lower than now, where they hugged the hot bricks to avoid the arrows of the Indians. The latter eventually withdrew, leaving the keepers marooned in the tower, with no way to descend. Rescuers finally *shot* over them a light cord by which a rope was sent up.

Key West became the port and main city of the region during the Mexican War, and remained so until the railroad reached Miami in 1896. Through this period only a few scattered settlers came to Biscayne Bay, most of them drifting on and leaving no trace. One of the earliest, still living in Miami, is Mrs. Adam C. Richards, who came from Charleston in 1858 with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Wagner, her father being storekeeper for the Army Post at Fort Dallas. The same year Isaiah Hall came from Georgia and established several points of residence, one being on Hall's Creek. He was of the pioneer type and had been on several exploring and shooting expeditions into Florida with Lord Sykes of London. Mrs. Hall lived to the age of 101, and enjoyed telling many stories of their adventures. Her son, William J. Hall, was the first white child born at Miami. The Indians she found uniformly friendly, honest and peaceable, and she evidently admired and liked them. Their trade outlet was Key West, of course, and Mr. Hall discovered the "inside route" there through the keys. Being of anti-slavery sympathies, he served as pilot on a Northern patrol boat early in the Civil War, and the family had at last to leave Miami for New River to avoid forced labor for the South at the hands of the Southerners in Key West. In 1865 they returned to Miami and built a new house and not long after this the Brickells arrived. The Halls later went to Big Pine Key and Marco, and many of the children live in Key West.

At Wiscasset, Maine, in 1914, when calling on the



Sewall family, relatives of Captain Sewall of Sewall's Point, Florida, I was asked if I ever knew of a Mr. Barnes who left Key West for Miami and there developed yellow fever, which was then raging in Key West. This was the predecessor of the Brickells, and he was cared for by William Wagner in the old Fletcher house, afterwards belonging to Mrs. Gilbert, which stood on the bank where the Gulf Refining Co.'s dock is now.

John Addison at Cutler was a scout of the Seminole War and he and his wife remained in their pleasant home until recent years, full of old Southern courtesy and interesting stories. Ochser, whose family is still in Miami, was another Seminole War veteran, as was "Long John" Holman, a picturesque figure who for many years during the war carried the mail from St. Augustine on foot, walking the beaches and swimming the inlets by night, and hiding from the Indians and other wilderness perils by day. He died this same year, 1877, at his home on what is now Musa Isle.

Other settlers of the early days disappeared long ago without trace. The Fergusons had a water-power sawmill at the rapids of the Miami by Musa Isle. I saw the remains of the mill, but since the dredging of a canal at that point there have been no signs of either rapids or mill. The Fergusons were prosperous enough to bring there a governess for their children. The same was true of the Cooleys of New River, of the Egans, Englishes, Lewises and others, many of them slaveholders, who planted cotton, indigo and other crops on the lands afterwards Brickell's. Their only touch with the world before Key West's growth was a mail service by small sloop to Charleston — a tenuous thread, indeed. They were the true pioneers of the Bay, rather than those who "came down on the first train," but isolation and the Civil War brought all their efforts to naught, and they are gone and almost forgotten.

The sea contributed some settlers. Jack Peacock, of



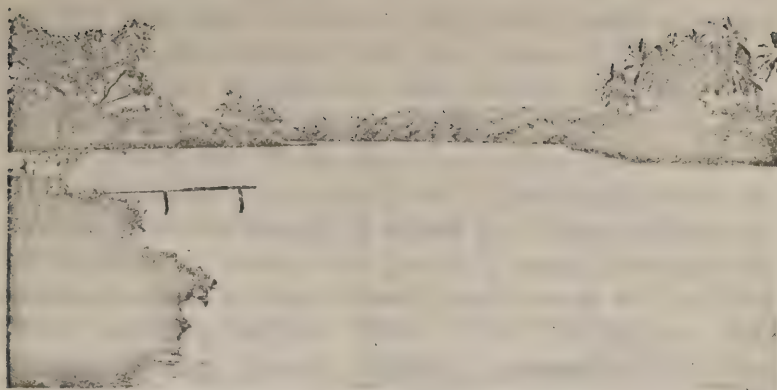


London, after tramping the western country, wandered down the Mississippi to New Orleans and eventually to Key West and thence to the Bay, where he found a wife in Martha Snipes, had nine sons and two daughters, and was a general favorite all his life. "Jolly Jack Peacock, one of the most humorous and frolicsome, original and ingenious, eccentric, good-hearted and wayward of men," as he was called by a later visitor.

Another sailor was Dan Clarke, an elderly man who lived up the Bay. In a small log cabin used as a kitchen, with no windows or chimney, and but one door, lived a very old negro woman who cooked for Clarke. The smoke from the fire found its way out in some manner unknown, and the whole interior was in consequence inky black. If the fire was not burning, a person in the doorway could distinguish nothing at first, but finally the old woman's eyes would show, and then the outlines of other objects, and the interview would be in a fair way of starting. From Aunt Lizzie's stories of events and persons in the days of her youth, around Norfolk and Richmond, it is fair to believe she had passed the hundred mark. Her bed consisted of a board, or perhaps two, not over fifteen inches wide, and five feet long, placed on a slight incline, and covered with a few rags. Here she had slept in a half-reclining position for many years, and claimed to like it.

At Fort Dallas was Mr. J. W. Ewan, a gentleman of culture and refinement in charge of the lands of the Biscayne Bay Co. of Georgia; these afterward were part of the property of Mrs. Julia Tuttle, on which Miami was built. With him were living Charles Peacock, a brother of "Jolly Jack," his wife and three boys. Charles had heard from Jack such glowing reports of the new region that without consultation he sold out his chophouse and cheesemongery in London and sailed for Key West, in company with a friend, Stephen M. Andrews, afterward well-known as the keeper of No. 2 House of Refuge, below Lake Worth. They arrived on the Bay unheralded





MIAMI RIVER FROM BRICKELL'S POINT  
Now the center of Miami



RAPIDS OF THE MIAMI RIVER  
Site of Ferguson's Mill



in July of 1875, found temporary shelter in Jack's lonely cottage at the south end of the bight — the same one which I found too isolated for comfort six years later — and were so overwhelmed by the wildness and roughness of the country that they were ready to jump into the sea the next day. However, they soon made arrangements of mutual benefit with Mr. Ewan at Fort Dallas, learned to love the country, and became chief factors in the development of Coconut Grove.

The whole Bay could claim but a few dozen settlers. In the few weeks of my stay in 1877 I naturally could not meet all of them, though it would have been quite possible to do so in twenty-four hours at most. One day was spent on a sail to Cape Florida and a visit to the light-house and its keepers. These were the Frows, Old Johnny, Young Johnny, Brother Joe and their wives. Everything was in perfect order, as is customary with such establishments, and the surrounding grounds, including a fine garden, were also in good condition.

South of Dinner Key, in what was to be Coconut Grove, was the Pent family, John and his wife, Tilly, three children and Uncle Dad Pent. They were among the oldest settlers of the Bay, and it was John's brother Ned whom I had met on Staten Island as the Florida Reef pilot of the Coast Wrecking Co. For many years Ned continued a resident of Coconut Grove, working mostly on various odd jobs, usually some form of carpentry. For a long time he was the only person on the Bay qualified to build coffins, and was regularly called on for this service. He responded under protest, however, which grew stronger as time went on, and at last liberal libations were necessary to bring him to the proper frame of mind. The recognized procedure then was to put the necessary lumber and a jug of whiskey in the workshop, and lock Ned in with them, toward nightfall; in the morning the whiskey would be gone and the coffin completed. It is said that this was given up only because, the last





time, Ned became so far confused before his courage was sufficiently braced that he lost track of what he was building, and in the morning was found asleep, alongside a nicely made coffin, complete with centerboard.

He certainly enjoyed the "beautiful" as Uncle Jack always called it, and no amount of indulgence seemed to do him any harm. The climax in this respect was reached on a grand Christmas spree with old man Saunders. They were gone three days, after which Saunders came to life up in Lemon City, but knew nothing of Ned, who was given up for lost. Some days later, after a hard norther, he was found lying on a sand-bank, having fallen overboard, drifted ashore, and lain there through the norther, almost down to freezing! He was far from dead, however; his cargo of Jamaica ginger and aguar-diente, mixed, had had a good "bite" and evidently saved his life.

Next to the Pents was the house of Old Johnny Frow, which is now in my back yard. It was built from white pine lumber, taken from the wreck of the bark *Three Sisters* driven ashore on Virginia Key in the hurricane of 1876. This fine lumber was in great demand and almost everyone on the Bay helped himself. The United States Marshal's attention being called to this wholesale diversion, a number were indicted, among them Mr. Ewan, but he had sufficient influence and connection to get everybody off. The Frows, as noted, were light-keepers on the Cape and only occasionally visited this place.

At the southwest end of the bight lived John Thomas Peacock (Jolly Jack) and his growing family, and beyond this, in the first large hammock, one Infinger and a surveyor named Paul. At Snapper Creek were Judge T. W. Faulkner, a Southern newspaper editor, and Charles Siebold, an educated man from Brooklyn. Above Dinner Key was Sam Rhoads, a forty-niner, his small son Walter, and Sam Jenkins.

Before leaving Key West with the Brickells, we had



been strongly advised not to put our lives in jeopardy by visiting this region, since a violent political quarrel was going on between three factions and renegades convicted of atrocious crimes in other parts were at large here, so that no one was safe. Even Mr. Brickell volunteered the statement that many of his neighbors were not trustworthy, but we were everywhere treated most politely and hospitably. Though some of the characters on the Bay proved later on to be even as gossip stated, still there was nothing to fear from them and many of them finally won my esteem and trust. Among these was William T. Benest, as I found him a reputable and trusted citizen, once tax collector. Rumor said, however, that as supercargo of a vessel belonging to his family he was responsible for various "sleight-of-hand" proceedings by reason of which she was never heard of again by them. Vagaries and indiscretions of early youth are often at the bottom of such troubles and there is nearly always a balance of admirable qualities.

Shortly after our arrival at Brickell's there was held on his place a meeting of the Dade County Commissioners and we were invited to attend. As the commissioners and others began arriving on boats and canoes, we noticed that many of them were armed to the teeth, prominent among these being Charley Moore, of Lake Worth, and Adam Richards. At my suggestion, in view of the Key West tales, Demarest and I took seats close by the door. But my partner from the far West after a few minutes' inspection whispered to me "perfectly harmless, Ralph, perfectly harmless!" and so it proved, notwithstanding the political tension and the fiery reputations.

There was also a fair proportion of well-balanced, progressive folk, genuine pioneers of civilization, who were trying to get a foothold against great odds. The political troubles alluded to were the result of the reconstruction period following the Civil War, commonly called the Carpet-bag Régime. Plans had evidently been





laid to absorb everything possible in the way of lands and offices, and they might have succeeded had it not been for the aforesaid real settlers who proceeded to put a kink in the operations and in the end prevailed.

Few on the Bay then had the faith in its future held by Mr. Brickell and few, accordingly, valued their land so high. He asked thirty dollars per acre for river-front lands, whereas down in "Jack's Bight" a tract of 160 acres, including a mile and a quarter of waterfront, had just been transferred from Anna Beasley to J. W. Frow, for a consideration of \$100! It was on a part of this tract that my home was afterwards built.

The Seminole Indians were frequent visitors to Mr. Brickell's trading store. Big Tiger, son of the old war-chief, Tigertail, with his squaw and papooses, were there when we arrived — fine specimens of Indians; if the rest of the tribe were anywhere near his equals, I don't wonder at the length of the two wars. Indian Charley, who had lost part of an ear for lying, and Jimmy, who was conspicuous for taking most excellent care of his old mother, I saw later, also Chief Tigertail and Cypress Tiger.

Mr. Brickell did a good business with them nearly every day. Deer and alligator skins, egret plumes, starch, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, gophers, etc., were the principal articles they brought in for barter, and in return took out, besides flour and other standard goods, a general lot of odds and ends hard to classify. One showed me a pair of field-glasses, \$15 trade, so he told me; I failed to discover anything but plain glass in them, though he seemed satisfied. Alarm clocks and hand-power sewing machines were in demand. Bright calico prints had displaced the old buckskin of their garments, which were often made up of a wide variety of colors and patterns; I have seen *fourteen* in one shirt.

"Barter," by the way, is not exactly the word for their business, since their values were fixed in coined silver,





CYPRESS CHARLIE'S SQUAW

Note the weight of necklaces and the elaborate dressmaking. Though the skirt was modestly long, there was always a gap of some inches between it and the waist, here covered by the lady's arms



and they always insisted on receiving the actual dollars for their goods, and then buying what they wanted. Often coins of various sizes would be kept and made into necklaces, and beads of all kinds were favorite goods, since the number, bulk and weight of a woman's necklaces marked her standing and prosperity; they were sometimes piled up from shoulder tip to ears.

In the following years many of the Indians were frequent and welcome visitors to my home in Coconut Grove. They were honest, industrious and admirable people, not a little abused by the first rush of rough frontiersmen who entered Florida and drove them from their homes with the aid of our army, which was called in to "avenge" various fabricated or exaggerated "Indian attacks." The remnant in Florida today is descended from the few hundreds which the government could not subdue or surround in twenty years of warfare — the only Indians in the country not wards of the United States.

When our time came to return, Mr. Brickell was reluctant to start for Key West, especially in the heart of the hurricane season, after the disastrous gales of the previous year, but we loaded the *Ada* with produce, including many barrels of limes picked on the Punch-Bowl tract, and after much persuasion made a start October 5. Lying for the night under the lee of Lower Matecumbe, a heavy squall developed into a norther and *Ada* rode hard all night, leaking like a sieve. Next morning I suggested a better harbor, but Mr. Brickell said he couldn't get his anchors. With his permission I sailed them out under close-reefed mainsail and jib, much to his astonishment, and we made for the old hurricane harbor, where we lay all day and the next night.

The third afternoon we started again for Key West, but had more squalls, carrying away some gear. I found that some of our trouble in getting out of harbor after once anchoring lay in a little hydrometer, consisting of a





toy man and woman that alternately went in and out of two doors, actuated by a piece of catgut which twisted and untwisted according to the amount of moisture in the air, and of course showed "stormy" at every rain squall. If the man was out, we were at once headed for some mosquito-hole of a harbor. Watching my chance I got hold of the machine, pulled out the woman, indicating fair, and stuck a pin behind her. After this, though we got caught in several rain squalls, we made good progress until the pin was discovered — and there ended my favor with Mr. Brickell!

Hog Key harbor got us that night and so did the mosquitoes, and no one got any sleep. Next morning there was a fair wind, but the hydrometer said wet, so Mr. Brickell and Willie went after firewood. Our patience was exhausted, especially since Demarest was far from well and very anxious to see a physician, so after waiting a reasonable time for Mr. Brickell to get his wood, I suggested to Mat, the darky crew, that he do as I bid him, for proper compensation, to which he assented. This was my only act of real piracy so far on record. We got the anchor short and hoisted the mainsail, which was of course the signal for Mr. B's return. On their approach I surely expected war to begin, but merely asked him on which tack he wished her paid off, broke out the anchor and set the jib. He walked aft and took the tiller and that's all there was to it!

At Key West, finding that there was yellow fever in Fernandina and other Florida points, we decided to wait for the *Rio Grande*, a Mallory liner from Galveston to New York. She did not arrive for several days, and we had a chance to get acquainted with the town.

Mr. Waddell, of the John White Bank, promptly cashed my check on New York, without question — friend number one! Mr. Jerry Fogarty, a large merchant, entertained us most hospitably. Mr. Moreno, Spanish consul, a Spanish-American gentleman of most refined



manners and language, was a pleasure, and Asa Tift, Captain Wynn, George Allen, John Lowe and many others did everything to make our stay pleasant. This was Key West, and we simply strangers — how it has since changed!

While waiting, the steamer *State of Texas* arrived from New York. This ship had been caught in a hurricane a year or so previous, and driven completely over the Reef, near Key West, without striking the rocks, and there stranded in comparatively smooth water with no serious damage. A thrilling account of the experience was afterward given me by Mrs. Waters S. Davis, of Cape Florida, who had been one of the passengers, bound for Galveston. Six colonists for Miami disembarked from her on this trip, full of enthusiasm, but the difficulties would seem to have been too great, for I never heard of them again.

The *Rio Grande* finally arrived, having been delayed by towing a disabled bark into Southwest Pass, Louisiana, and we were off for home, with only four passengers and Captain Bolger. We had a pleasant voyage and I was ready to go to Biscayne Bay again at the first opportunity. The summer climate and the comparative freedom from insect pests as compared with the vicinity of New York had impressed me favorably; in fact, nearly everything appealed to me. But Demarest said "None for me!" He afterward went to Cuba and died of yellow fever.

My favorable impression of Biscayne Bay was both deep and lasting. Undoubtedly the first element in this was the incomparable climate. Along with this, and in some measure a part of it, was the sea-lover's eager appreciation of this sailor's paradise, in which calms, storms, fogs, ice, and many other marine hazards were either unknown or rare. There was also a keen fascination in the varied humanity drawn to the wilderness. Both virtues and frailties are attracted by the chances of pioneer adventure, and the handful of Biscayne settlers in 1877 included a





wider variety of character and history than many a Northern town. Their isolation and mutual dependence brought out their peculiarities in high relief, while at the same time it touched them with a warmth of friendship and service unknown in large communities. This close touch with those of simple and genuine life was a great part of the charm of my Fire Island winter, and it helped to establish Biscayne Bay permanently in my affections.



## IX

### BUSINESS AND MARRIAGE

THE first business problem at home was to find use for the machinery and steam power left idle by the action of Pratt & Co. in the keg business. A son of the Dr. Smith previously mentioned was anxious to buy out a manufacturer of oil of cloves in Brooklyn, and finally induced me to lend the necessary capital. I soon found that unless I took a personal interest I would never get the money back, so I moved the work to our Staten Island property.

With close attention I got it on a paying basis, so that we closed up the manufacture of this oil in the only three places we knew of in this country, and had a monopoly. We were then limited only by the price of the imported article, which we could cut under and make a fair profit. Dodge & Olcott of New York, Phillips of Connecticut and Powers & Weightman of Philadelphia were the ones we bested on the cost of manufacture and we were not a little proud of it. This business, though not capable of great expansion, might have been carried on indefinitely, and Smith was entirely dependent on it, with a growing family, so I sold out to him. Unfortunately he soon lapsed into irregular methods and finally ran away, leaving me to close up the affair, which I did without much loss.

This summer I became acquainted with Dr. Moseley, a great explosives engineer from England, and a friend of "Billy" Townsend of Townsend's Wharf, then under lease to my father. He had come over via Canada, where he had picked up the cutter *Gauntlet*, built at Quebec, a deep, heavy boat on English lines elaborately finished, and decorated with landscapes painted on every panel of



her cabin. At Mattawan he settled down to the manufacture and sale of nitroglycerin, then comparatively unknown. It was very erratic, the more manageable form of dynamite coming later, and no railroad or other common carrier would handle it on any terms.

Being too busy for yachting, he asked me to take charge of the *Gauntlet* and sell her, which seemed rather difficult, as she was not only deep, heavy and hard to handle, but poorly fastened and leaky. (Her main boom was ten inches in diameter, as I knew full well one day when it gave me a crack on the head!) In these conditions he proposed to set me up in business on the boat, transporting nitroglycerin along the coast. It might have been interesting, but I refused, somewhat preferring not to be blown up! Eventually I found a buyer for her.

A valued and exceedingly interesting acquaintance of these days was Meucci, a genial, pleasant old Italian gentleman, limited in command of English, always dressed in neat but threadbare clothing. He was a one-time soldier of fortune, had fought under Garibaldi, and afterward became a stage carpenter at the old Havana Theater. While there, in the years before 1850, he had invented the basic principles of the telephone, and carried on a conversation over a wire.

Of these events he often told me, and of his later troubles in getting a patent in the United States, for which he applied. Then came Graham Bell's announcement of his perfection of the telephone, and the famous litigation against him by several claimants of priority. Meucci found backers, and the war became fierce. Common report was that Bell stock fell at the time to ten cents a share, with no buyers, until a rumor spread among the inner circle of a court decision in Bell's favor, and the shares were snapped up wherever procurable. A lucky friend of mine made a fortune.

While these suits were in progress Meucci burst in one morning, greatly excited. It seems that in his stress for





money during many years of poverty and hopelessness, he had disposed of his accumulation of experimental material, together with some models, to a junk dealer. These were needed for evidence, but apparently all track of them was lost, and he told me about it merely in the desire for sympathy. As it turned out, however, I had bought this very lot of material without knowing its former owner, or examining it closely, and taking Mcucci upstairs, restored to him all that he needed! With this new ammunition the fight waxed hot again, but my poor old friend was eventually defeated, and ill-luck pursued him throughout his life.

I have mentioned the acquaintance with Thomas Hewitt. It was not long after entering upon the hospitality of his home that I fell very much in love with his youngest daughter, Eva Amelia, named for her Aunt Amelia, who was Mrs. Edward Cooper. We were married at her home in Clifton on July 16, 1879, and the same evening started on our wedding trip on my new yacht *Petrel*, bound for Newport. *Petrel* was a thirty-foot sloop, constructed almost entirely by myself, and proved both fast and seaworthy.

I had bought a few acres on the waterfront at Great Kills, a beautiful little harbor on the southeast shore of Staten Island, with New York, the lower bay, the ocean, Sandy Hook, the Highlands of Navesink and the Jersey coast extending past Keyport for outlook. Here, with my father's help, I had built a rather odd but comfortable house, octagon in shape, of tongued and grooved two-inch plank, bolted edgewise. At the water's edge were a boathouse and wharf.

My land was part of the old Seguire farm, and the house was next door to their stone house, over two hundred years old. Other farms near had been owned by the Poillions, Guyons, Van Cliefs and Mesereaus. At Richmond, the nearest town, were many nice people of the old Dutch and Huguenot stock, also Admiral Benham



and other distinguished folk. The principal church was St. Andrew's, which was endowed by Queen Anne, and had from her a silver communion service. I fully expected to make this a permanent home, but events so shaped themselves that it was to be mine only eight years.

About this time I decided to let my intense liking for the sea have its way, and prepared to engage in the oyster-planting business, building a steam oyster-dredging boat, the first, with one small exception, hailing from New York. And here, after sixteen years, Ellis's young foreman, who had helped the schoolboys float their leaky boat on the Raritan, comes back into the story; for the *J. P. Musereau* was built, during the winter of 1880, at the yard of A. C. Brown, in Tottenville. Soon after she was cut in two and lengthened, having immediately made more business than she could handle. Oysters were scarce and high, owing to a severe winter, and having a powerful craft we were able to keep open the beds, which at one time in Northport harbor were covered with sixteen inches of ice.

My partner, Captain Daniel Burbank, was the oyster expert, while I looked after the machinery. There was some trouble with the Marine Engineers' Society of New York, who, instigated by the unions, attempted to force us to employ two engineers and two firemen. I took out a license, which I could do as owner, and served as engineer myself for nearly a year, until the difference with the unions was settled, in our favor. They opposed the granting of this license because I had not served four years in the fire room but this was overcome by a little pressure on the New York inspector, Matthews, from our friend the superintendent of the Vanderbilt ferry to Staten Island.

This oyster business developed in a satisfactory way. Captain Burbank eventually made a fortune with the same vessel, which was still running in 1909, and I would have remained in it also but for the events which took me back to Florida.





In the fall of 1881 the doctors informed me my wife Eva had tuberculosis, and without an absolute change of climate would be incurable. We thought immediately of beautiful Biscayne Bay, and at once prepared to go there. Eva's older sister, Adeline, was similarly affected, and with their brother, Thomas, and a companion, Mrs. O'Dea, we sailed for Key West on the Mallory steamer, as soon as possible. Our infant daughter, Edith, was left with my mother in the home at Great Kills, and we never saw the little one again, for she died during the winter.

With us on the steamer's deck went a thirty-foot sharpie sailboat, which was a complete novelty in Key West waters, and excited much comment. The general opinion was that owing to her excessively light draft (8 inches) she would be useless except in running before the wind, and their astonishment was great when they found none among the native craft able to beat her to windward. They dubbed her *Skipperee* and the name stuck.

We sailed to the Bay in the schooner *Adelaide*, owned by the Frows, and established ourselves in a vacant house offered us by Mr. Ewan. The adjoining place was later purchased by Dr. David Fairchild, who is now in charge of Agricultural Explorations for the United States Department of Agriculture. He has introduced many a plant immigrant from remote countries in his own and his friends' gardens in Coconut Grove. His father-in-law, Alexander Graham Bell, for many years occupied a cottage on the Fairchild place.

We soon made ourselves comfortable, but the nearest neighbor then was over a mile distant, which was not conducive to cheer or health, and we moved to Miami. Our tents were pitched between the river and the site of the Royal Palm Hotel, a little west of its center; a large coconut tree which we planted now marks the spot. Palmetto thatches were made over the tents, and with



the hospitable Peacock family near us in Fort Dallas and the Brickells just across the river, we felt quite homelike. Nowhere could we have received more absolutely disinterested and kindly help and attention than were here freely given us.

I built a skiff and made some fishing trips, and the time passed, but not with pleasure, for neither Eva nor her sister improved. After a visit from Dr. James A. Henshall, who came down from Indian River in the schooner *Rambler* on an exploring trip, we began to lose all hope for our dear one, and if possible we would have started for the North at once. A few weeks later we laid her to rest, close by, and striking our camp set sail for Key West and home. Just as the steamer made fast to the wharf in New York Eva's sister Addie also died, and the sadness of our return was complete.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Henshall, in *The Cruise of the Rambler*, wrote of their camp as follows: "The group of white tents gave additional charm to a spot as lovely and romantic as a scene in fairyland. The outfit was complete and comfortable and they enjoyed the open-air life. Mrs. M. and Miss H. were afflicted with consumption, and had come as a last resource to try the virtues of the chlorinated breezes, balmy atmosphere and warm bright sun of this, the fairest, most charming and most healthful location in Florida. Miss H. had been benefited, but the insidious destroyer had impressed his red seal on the fair wan cheeks of her patient and courageous sister, and claimed her for his own.

"One evening, as the full round moon rose grandly over the beautiful bay, bathing the palms in a flood of silvery light, we sat under the fly of the tent, the fair sufferer propped upon pillows in an easy chair, the soft and grateful breeze fanning gently her fevered brow, while her great dark-gray eyes calmly and peacefully drank in the glorious and wondrous beauty of the scene, and loving ones whispered words of hope and encouragement. But as the silvery track of the moon was flung across the waters of the broad bay, almost to her very feet, I knew, alas, that it was the shining pathway by which she would soon travel heavenward. She is now at rest, in a spot fitting for one so pure and lovely."



## X

### “PEACOCK’S,” 1882-3

THE sad summer was spent quietly at Great Kills, where some time went to the designing of a new boat. While cruising among the Florida Keys I had run across a peculiarly modeled schooner, the *Rapid*, which the owner said was a very old boat. Her bow had a long overhang, which struck me favorably, so much so that I incorporated it in the design of a 43-foot sloop, *Anemone*, which was built at Brown’s yard, and excited much comment. She was successful in every way, but the prejudice against overhang at either end was so strong that I had to alter her stem so as to resemble in profile the fashion in vogue. Shortly after this the same idea was worked out by the Herreshoffs of Bristol, Rhode Island, and is now embodied in all racing craft throughout the world. During her building I was again carried back to Eagleswood by discovering in the head painter Tom McCann, who had helped to decorate my first boat, *Hornet*, twenty years before at the school.

In the fall I advertised *Anemone* for sale and Gilbert Haight replied — a large and hearty man, long fleet-captain of the New York Yacht Club. He was No. 15 on its roll, and had owned twenty-seven yachts, so he certainly did not lack experience. He liked the description of *Anemone* and asked how she handled. “Oh, she’ll handle,” I answered, “she’ll go to windward under either mainsail or jib alone.”

“Oh my, no!”

“Come down and I’ll show you.”

We had just time to catch the Staten Island boat, and in an hour were on board *Anemone*. I set the jib and cast off the mooring lashings. “You’re not going to take her





out of the anchorage here without the mainsail, are you — wind right on shore?"

"Of course," said I, and dropped the mooring. The jib filled and she paid off toward shore, but quickly gathered way and came under control, after which she easily worked out across the bay against the southeast wind.

"All right," said Haight, "come up for your check." When I got it he turned to me, saying, "What are you doing next summer?"

"Nothing special."

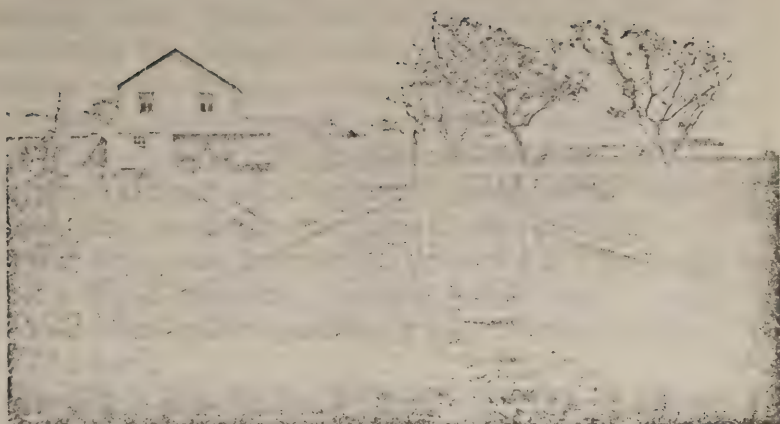
"Come on board as my guest." I finally did so and had a good time, and he was a good friend until his death.

Before selling *Anemone* (renamed *Domino* by Mr. Haight), I made several cruises east to Narragansett Bay, New Bedford, etc. I had one good cruise as far as Bristol, Rhode Island, accompanied by my mother and Miss McFarlane. Later I cruised also with Mr. A. C. Rand, of the Laughlin & Rand Powder Co. (afterward the Ingersoll-Rand Co.) and he became quite a friend. He was one of the contractors for the removal of Flood Rock in Hellgate and I was offered a share in that interesting work.

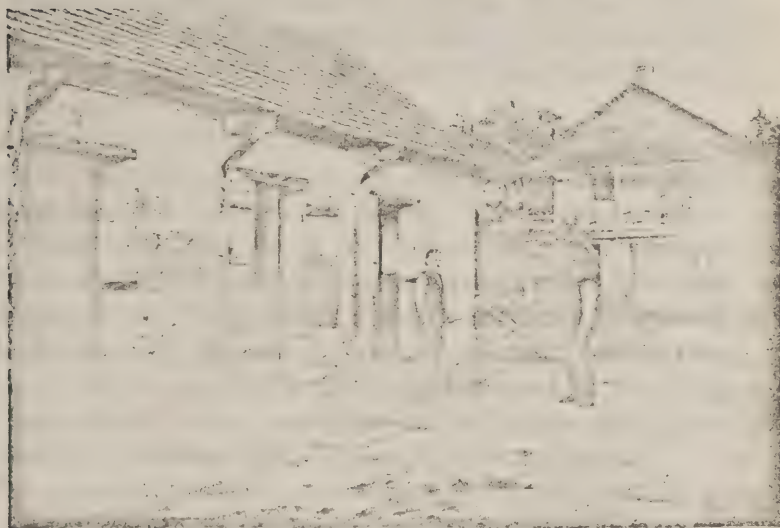
At Bristol, I renewed a former partial acquaintance with the Herreshoffs, John, Nathaniel and Charles, and found much to interest me at their boatyards. John, the blind one, was remarkable in his ability to attend to business, even to the direction of the men at their work. Nat had the brains of the family, however, as his success since has proved. We little thought then that he was to spend several winters in a cottage on my grounds at Coconut Grove, over forty years later! This association is now one of the great pleasures of my home.

Another Bristol friend was Captain Lawless, ex-senior commander of the Morgan Line. He had a handsome residence on the site of Fort Rounds, and his chief delight seemed to be the entertaining of visiting yachtsmen, or





BAY VIEW VILLA, LATER PEACOCK INN  
Dinner Key in background. Note that no other buildings are visible



OLD FORT DALLAS





rather sailors. For some reason he took a special fancy to me, and his house, garden, ice house and carriages were all at my disposal, and nothing too good for me. He showed me with much pride a working model of the steamship *Charles Morgan*, made of silver, which had been given him by Mr. Morgan on his retirement from the sea.

But the events of the previous winter had nearly ended my interest in Northern affairs, and with the fall I was impelled to visit again the place where I had left my wife. With the kindness of its people uppermost in mind, Biscayne Bay, its shores and climate, seemed even more attractive than ever. I wrote the Peacocks at Fort Dallas to find a bit of waterfront, build a house and I would come to advise and help as best I could in the establishment of a hotel.

They first selected Billy Mettair's bight, now Lemon City, but I immediately wrote urging a location south of the Miami, and fortunately the letter was received before building was begun. They then took over a part of the Beasley homestead from the Frows, in what is now Coconut Grove, and commenced building the new house, which stood until 1925, in the rear of the former Lake Placid School.

Accompanied by my brother-in-law, Mott Hewitt, I sailed for Key West and put in commission the sharpie *Skipperree* laid up there in the spring. We found the Peacocks busy building, living meanwhile in a small house which is now a tool and storehouse at my home. This was the house of the *Three Sisters* wreck, previously described as the home of the Frows. It seemed to have a roving disposition, for it was taken apart and moved to Bamboo Key and several other locations before finally settling in the rear of my house, where its timbers are still good.

The carpenter work on the new house went slowly, as was usual then. The builders, through very necessary economy, had bought only flooring, siding, sheathing, window-sash, a door or two and a little hardware. All



the frame and wood they expected to get from driftwood on the outer beaches, which was always abundant, but usually too heavy. Of course it was hard to match; one deck-load might have gone overboard off the Tortugas and others two hundred miles farther — inconvenient, but not to be helped. If one wanted rafters and joists of even sizes it became a matter of hand rip-saws and axes and many a mile of that work was done without complaint, on timbers eight and twelve inches square! Later I rigged a whip-saw, with top and under sawyers, and by 1890 we had a steam mill.

When it came to roofing, it was decided that the time had passed for palmetto thatch, which had been the usual resource, so I scoured the beaches again, and brought in a fine white pine foremast belonging to a wrecked brig. This we sawed into shingle lengths, and then with an old-fashioned tool called a "frow," followed by draw-knife, we turned out an A1 article of shingles, which lasted more than twenty years. These must have been about the last ever rived with a frow — a most ancient tool.

When the house was finished I must admit that there was little evidence of architectural beauty; there were no chimneys, and during cold northers we had to go out in the back yard at night and sit around a log fire, while, with the stumps of the newly felled trees to bring one up every few steps, the grounds were not inviting. But it was a *home*, thanks to the kind and hospitable friends who kept it. Known at first as "Bay View Villa," the name was soon changed to "Peacock Inn" and the establishment had a long and profitable history during which several larger buildings were added. It was the only hotel in south Dade County, and many an early visitor to the Bay remembers with grateful appreciation its good food and other comforts. Mrs. Peacock all her life was the mother, nurse, teacher, friend and helper to the growing community, and is most affectionately remembered.



An effort was immediately made to establish a post office so that it might not be necessary to go to the Miami River for mail, but the required number of residents could not yet be mustered, and the matter was dropped. During the winter, however, on the occasion of a visit to Fowey Rock light, there was some sarcastic comment on the reading-matter sent to the lonely keepers, much of which consisted of ancient government reports and other similarly thrilling and helpful material. A pile of this was laid aside for destruction, and in turning it over I picked up an eight-year-old post-office report, in which my eye chanced on the following entry: "Coconut Grove Post Office, four miles south of Miami, discontinued."

This was the first knowledge of an earlier post office in the neighborhood, which no one remembered, though Aunt Tilly Pent told me that some years before my coming a Dr. Porter had lived in the vicinity, and it was guessed that he established the post office. This changed the problem of the new community's mail, since the requirements for reopening an old office were much less difficult than for establishing a new one. There were enough settlers for the former, and Coconut Grove post office was reopened, much to the disgust of the two small schooners which made weekly mail trips from Key West. Their skippers raved over having to come "way out of their course into this bight for a parcel of fellows who won't get any mail worth the trouble anyway." This gave, for the second time, the present name of "Coconut Grove" to what had been known as Jack's Bight. But as only two coconut trees were standing in the bight, the permanent name called for a deal of explanation to newcomers in the next few years, so I very shortly had the old Porter grove of coconuts replanted on a much larger scale. By the year 1923 this grove had attained such fine proportions that Rex Ingram, one of the foremost movie directors, was attracted to its adaptability in





preference, as he stated, to any he had seen in other parts of the tropics. Obtaining our consent, he proceeded to picture the play called "Where the Pavement Ends" which took nearly all summer and part of the autumn. This was a period of great interest to the inmates of the "Barnacle." When leaving, Mr. Ingram presented me with several beautiful photographic views, one of which shows the principal actors in the play listening to my explanation of the growth of a coconut.

The history of the early post office long remained unknown. The original patentee of nearly the whole of Jack's Bight was Edmund D. Beasley, but he never occupied the land. Many inquiries were made, but it was not until forty years later that the story was completed. Beasley was severely wounded in the Civil War and for his services he was given 160 acres, with a mile and a quarter of waterfront. It proved, however, that he was permanently invalided, and after spending some years in hospitals, he died without taking possession, though it was rumored that he had camped there in the forties.

In 1925 a Washington acquaintance of mine found Dr. Porter's application and grant for a post office at Coconut Grove, Florida, January 6, 1873. The full name was Horace P. Porter. I promptly wrote an account of his valuable work, with a request for further information, which was published in the Miami "Herald." The response was a call from Mrs. Liddell of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, youngest daughter of Dr. Porter. She presented me with an excellent portrait of her father inscribed on the back with his Civil War history, which is here appended.

**Dr. Horace P. Porter**

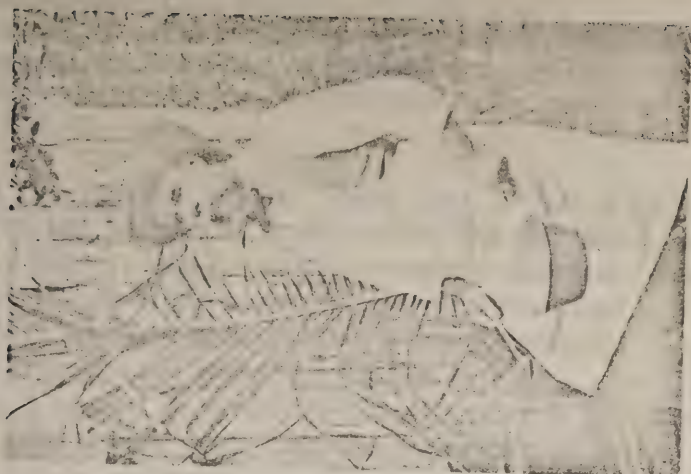
Graduated from the medical department of Yale College in the class of 1861.

A few months afterwards enlisted in the Civil War as assistant surgeon of the 7th Volunteer Infantry.

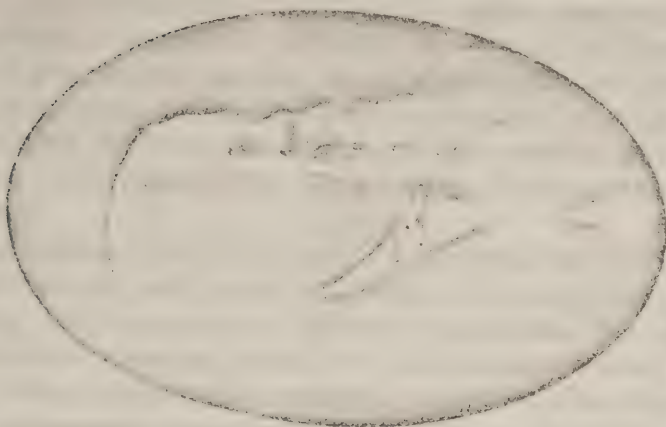
Later was made Surgeon of the 10th Conn. Vol. Inftry.

Was Surgeon of the hospital at Beaufort, S. C., and had 9 doctors,





CHARLES PEACOCK



DR. HORACE P. PORTER





100 nurses and 2,000 sick and wounded in his charge though the youngest doctor of the staff.

Was also stationed at St. Augustine for awhile.

While at Beaufort, Clara Barton was his head nurse.

After the war closed he was sent by the government to Fort Casper, Wyoming, to take charge of the hospital there.

At one time he was Surgeon General of the G. A. R.

Died Sept. 23, 1912.

So the mystery of Dr. Porter was at last partially cleared up; enough at least to give him the credit due him. I felt sure that he was a person of consequence from the beginning of the search of forty-one years and it is a source of much gratification that it was persisted in.

Dr. Porter may well have known Beasley at the Disabled Veterans Hospital at Beaufort, South Carolina, and have caught from him the enthusiasm of one who had actually camped in the Biscayne Bay region. At all events, Porter settled there in 1873, cleared a tract of land and planted many trees, including a large coconut grove. He established the Coconut Grove post office, presumably through the influence of some of his friends in the government service, since there could not have been the number of settlers formally required — in fact, there were probably no others at all — and it was in service until February 3, 1874, when his interest was diverted.

The disastrous hurricane of 1876 destroyed all but two of the coconuts and by 1882 the forest had overgrown and hidden the remnants of Porter's plantation. When I commenced clearing, soon after this, close-set rows of lime trees, evidently the remains of a nursery of seedlings, were uncovered, as well as a number of excellent mangos and avocados, among which were the large bottle-necked variety and the late-bearing kind. Strictly speaking, Porter should have credit for introducing these, rather than Trapp, to whom they are now ascribed. Several of these trees are now just in their prime.



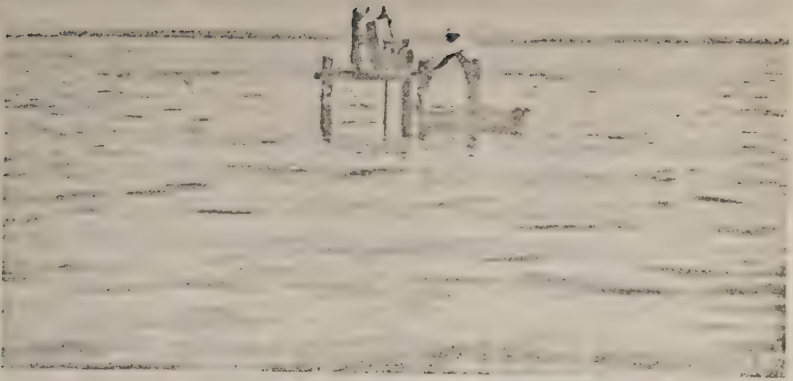
Along with the trees we found also the mysterious "well" near which my house was finally built. This is a large excavation in the rock, one side being cut into a flight of steps which leads to a small basin about eight feet below the surface. There are many fresh-water springs in the neighborhood, most of them boiling up through the salt water of the Bay, and Porter presumably dug the well to tap one of these. For years, before Dr. Porter's relatives were located, many romantic legends were current as to the origin of the well, the favorite being that it was dug by Ponce de Leon in his search for the Fountain of Youth.

The Spanish charts which first described South Florida noted "Fresh Water" on the mainland northwest of the point now known as Cape Florida. This very likely refers to a creek having its origin in a fine spring, on the property now Mr. John B. Semple's, for many years the home of Kirk Munroe. This water is beautifully clear, but being impregnated with lime to some extent, its use as drinking water was given up, and it was turned into a swimming-pool.

The marsh land which borders so much of the Bay was at this point very narrow, and where my boathouse now stands there was evidence of an early landing place and an Indian trail leading back to the Everglades. This can yet be followed, up past the old well, on the right, until lost in the rocky crest of the hill. The lower part of it is the walk we use today to the boathouse; this had originally a few stepping-stones, but required only a little filling to make a good path.

So Coconut Grove was established — or rather re-established. Before the Bay View Villa was finished the Peacocks had their coontie mill set up to keep the pot boiling. Later a lean-to was added, north of the house, for the post office, and a modest stock of groceries here laid the foundation for the Charles Peacock & Son store, for many years the chief market of the neighborhood.





FRESH WATER FROM THE SEA

Many springs boiled up from the bottom of the bay, and good water could be pumped from a pipe driven into one of them — a great convenience to yachts



LIGHTHOUSE AT CAPE FLORIDA, 1828-77





At this time, besides the Pents and Frows mentioned as residents in 1877, George Roberts and family had settled near Dinner Key, and the home of Sam Rhoads and his small son Walter was a short distance northeasterly. Dinner Key, by the way, was probably named as a convenient noon stopping place between Miami River and Snapper Creek, or the Hunting Grounds, since there were few chances to land elsewhere without encountering wet marsh.

On the whole waterfront at this time there were no buildings, or other landmarks, and in making for home after dark, Coconut Grove was exceedingly difficult to locate. Had it not been for occasional glimpses of Aunt Tilly Pent's outdoor cooking fire, we should have gone astray many times.

Early this winter there appeared the United States Coast Survey schooner *Ready*, in charge of Mr. Otto Tittman, who was later head of the Bureau in Washington. With him were Lieutenant VanDuzer and Midshipman Katz of the Navy. Their errand was the retriangulation of the coast northward from the old base line which commenced at Cape Florida. Another party was to work southward from Jupiter, and each was keen for a quick start and rapid work.

They were, accordingly, in anything but an amiable frame of mind when Hewitt and I visited them on the day after their arrival, for on opening up the steel wire with which they intended to make the primary beach measurements, they found it coiled as it came from the draw-table, without having been straightened. When the clips were taken off, the coils took charge of the deck, after the manner of Waterbury watch springs on a large scale. They had tried every method to straighten it except the right one, and when we arrived were on the point of sending to Key West and telegraphing for the proper article, which meant a delay of a fortnight or more. Hewitt was thoroughly conversant with wire,



having worked in the Cooper-Hewitt Wire Mills in Trenton, and when he suggested that he might be able to help them, it was like the calming of the gale!

Asking for a few spikes, hammer and plank, he soon had them straightening wire as fast as it could be pulled through the staggered spikes. This put us on good terms with the party; nothing was too good for us, and we spent many pleasant days on the *Ready* and at their camps along the beach for the rest of the winter.

The end of the old base line had been marked by a marble obelisk mounted on a granite base, south of the lighthouse, but the sea had cut away the point, and the site of the monument was in deep water. They therefore located themselves by the center of the lantern table, which had been used as a check for just such a contingency. Some time later, when the party had covered fifteen miles of the coast, I happened to remark that the light had been built up thirty-five feet higher than it was originally. Consternation resulted, as their field notes had not mentioned this, and the question was, had the builders carried the center of that table up in the same axis as the old one?

Back went all hands to the Cape early next morning, and after much calculating and observation it was determined that the error was about half an inch. The reader may remark "that wasn't much to fuss about," but if he will look up the methods of the Coast Survey, their definition of accuracy will prove a revelation.

During the previous winter Messrs. H. B. Lum and Stillwell Grover, of Red Bank, New Jersey, had sailed from Key West in a small boat, looking for land to plant coconuts. The journey itself was a bit of courageous pioneering for them, since they knew nothing whatever of sailing, and actually worked up along the keys with jib hauled flat amidships all the way, being blown out into the Gulf Stream more than once, and taking four weeks for the trip. Lum finally bought a tract just north





of Narres Cut, then called Brama's Landing, and later did some planting.

This work interested his friend, Ezra Osborn, of Middletown, New Jersey (a well-known engineer, designer of Hollywood on the Jersey Coast), and a company was formed to secure all the vacant beach lands from Cape Florida to Jupiter, about eighty miles, and plant them. They got most of them, spending over a hundred thousand dollars, and then Osborn's foreman, E. T. Field, was put in charge of the planting. Gangs of men accustomed to beach and surf work were brought from New Jersey, with surf-boats, and schooners were chartered to bring loads of coconuts from St. Andrew's, Greytown, Nicaragua, and Baracoa, Cuba. For several years their camps were a picturesque touch of life on the otherwise desolate coast.

The coconut planting was contrary to my views, and I declined to take an interest in the venture, being convinced that coconuts could not be grown commercially in this latitude, owing to poor land and occasional frost, as well as the destruction of the young plants by rats and rabbits. This has proven to be the case, the nuts being poor in oil-content, their chief value, in comparison with those of the West Indies and the South Seas. However, when they embarked in it I did all I could to help them, and was later agent of the heirs of Mr. Osborn for his land on Key Biscayne, part of which I sold to Mr. W. J. Matheson. Only a few of the many thousands of trees planted by Field and Osborn are in existence, and the direct result of this big investment in the region was a heavy loss.

Mr. John Collins was one of the company, however, and his interest directed attention to the Beach, which has been one of the prominent factors in Miami development. His great bridge, at the time of its construction said to be the largest wooden bridge in the world, and the several beach companies which have been so abundantly



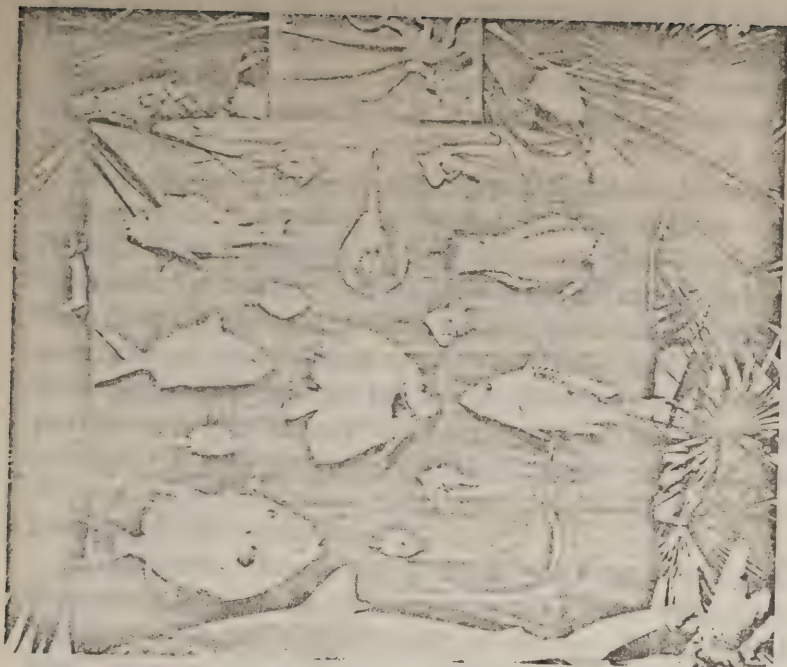
successful, are really an offshoot of the coconut-planting of Field and Osborn, who were merely a few years ahead of the proper time.

This winter the Bay was visited by the first yacht I had seen there, the yawl *Seminole*, belonging to Mr. Andrew E. Douglass of New York, a well-known ethnologist. He was on a mound-digging expedition in search of Indian pottery, and only one good specimen rewarded his efforts in this vicinity, though there were no end of fragments.

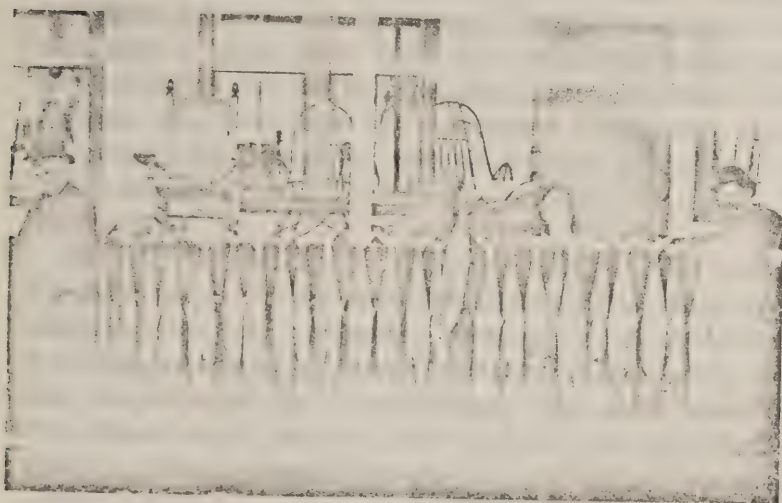
In March, 1883, Hewitt and I sailed northward in *Skipperree*, planning to sell the sharpie where we could en route. We went out at Bear's Cut, reaching Jupiter — 70 miles distant — next morning and luckily found the inlet open and the tide favorable. Travel on this part of the coast, then and for several years after, was limited to small shoal-draft boats capable of crossing the shallow bars when not too much sea was running. If it blew, they had to stay outside, and the journeys were not always pleasure trips. The only alternative was walking the beach, of which more hereafter.

From Jupiter the trip was uneventful until we reached Eden on St. Lucie Sound, where our attention was attracted by a handkerchief waved from a wharf. Making a landing we found James Mott of Glen Cove, Long Island, who was anxious to get away and begged us to take him with us. He told us that Richards, with whom he was boarding, had induced him to come from Titusville on his sloop, promising to take him back whenever he wished. Since he was loath to part with good paying boarders, however, he reported that the sloop was quite unseaworthy and all attempted repairs failed. No other craft appeared and our advent was hailed with joy by the marooned Mott, who was already some weeks overdue for important business engagements in New York, and was in a fine state of mind. We took him and his baggage aboard, much to his relief, as he feared something would be trumped up to hold the latter.





"FROZEN FISH," LONG KEY



A FEW KINGFISH





I afterward learned that this was a common trick played by many along the river. Richards afterward introduced pineapples to the river, and became quite rich from the fruit, and from some sort of "live-forever" cordial made from its juice.

Mott landed at Rockledge very grateful for his rescue, and gave us a pressing invitation to visit him on Long Island. This I afterward did, and was most hospitably received. He turned out to be a man of much interest; though of Quaker extraction, he had done many venturesome things, and showed us with pride the hull of the old slave-yacht *Wanderer* on his beach, in which he had been part owner. Her history was partly told in the "Rudder" in 1906. I had previously met Captain Hawkins, her skipper of stormy days, and spent a thrilling evening listening to his reminiscences.

At Daytona, then a small place, we found a Captain Rogers of New London who was a sailboat enthusiast. He had a saucer-shaped craft of almost circular deck-plan, said to be a Russian model, which he claimed could beat anything of her length, and a match was soon arranged for the next morning. The day came in with rain and a heavy gale from the east, and Russia and Rogers were not in it from the start. An hour later *Skipperree* was sold to a Mr. Lawrence Thompson, storekeeper, for our own price, and we engaged passage on the little freight-steamer *Greenwich*, Captain Howard, for Jacksonville.

At St. Augustine the passengers prevailed on the Captain to put in for the night, agreeing to see that he and his crew had a pleasant evening. At the hotel here I met my old friends James Davis and Cubberly Vanderbilt, nephew of the Commodore, who were spending the winter there. We reached Jacksonville next day at noon and took train for Savannah. On this run we actually got out and walked ahead of the train at times, but we eventually arrived and took ship for New York.



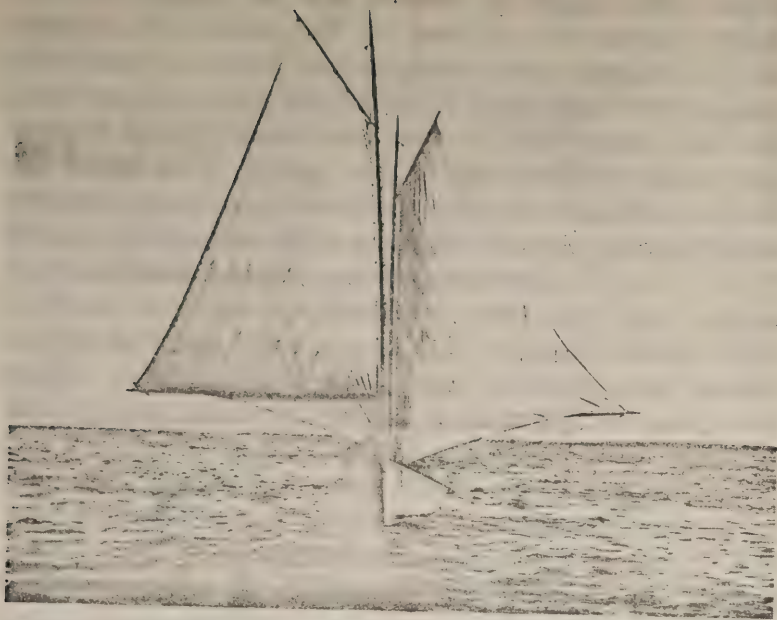
At Jacksonville on this trip began a little episode that might be entitled "The Trunk that was not a Trunk, or The Passenger versus the Baggage Man." On leaving home for this third trip to Florida, expecting to pass most of my time in a nearly open boat on a surf-bound coast, and wishing to minimize the discomforts and privations consequent upon miscalculations while toying with old Neptune, it occurred to me that the ordinary trunk or sailor's chest was far from being a safe receptacle for spare clothing, matches and other articles that should be kept dry. A barrel at once suggested itself, provided with a hand-hole plate secured tightly against a rubber gasket with bolt and recessed nut. To be sure, the socket wrench was a trifle clumsy as a key, but not easily mislaid, and not too heavy to swim with — just the thing!

So we hied ourselves to one of those old delightful South Street, New York, cellar cooperages and selected a well-seasoned twenty-gallon "half-barrel" with galvanized hoops, and up to the time of reaching Jacksonville this trunk fulfilled every requirement, though the necessity of swimming with it did not arise.

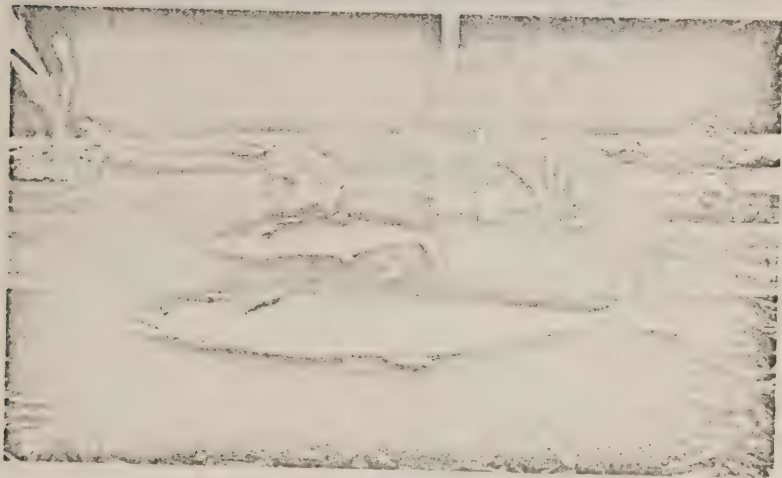
"Check, please" to the baggage agent when leaving for Savannah. "Sorry, sir. Not allowed to check barrels, besides, there's no place to attach it." A staple in the head was shown him, but — no use, orders were orders. "I'll put it in the baggage car for you, and if you will arrange with a transfer-man to the ship you'll get along." This I did satisfactorily, as I supposed, and waited at the wharf for its arrival with the other baggage. It lacked only thirty minutes of sailing time when the transfer-man hastily explained that the station agent had held the barrel for seventy-five cents freight. Up the gangplank I skipped, found the Captain and told him the tale in about three words. "Go it, I'll hold the ship a few minutes," said he. One of the passenger busses was just leaving, and giving the driver fifty cents not to stop, I got promptly to the end of his route. As luck would have it,







SHARPIE "KINGFISH"



CAPE FLORIDA KINGFISH AND HIS SMALL COUSIN,  
SPANISH MACKEREL



there stood an old darky with a good horse but a ramshackle wagon. He was a sport all right, and with a promise of a dollar, off we went for the station, which stood out in a field with a picket fence around it. The gate was open and the barrel in plain sight on the platform. A quick transfer was made to the wagon, and with the horse on a gallop, out of the yard we sailed, the aroused agent on a dead run after us. Sudden remembrance of his open office and cash-drawer probably gave him a second thought and he returned.

There were no telephones in 1883, and the venture now looked safe if the wagon held together, which, if the reader ever traveled those old cobble-paved streets, would seem a fine risk to bet against. But we won, with five minutes to spare, and as the barrel went into the port the Captain remarked "Let's see him get it now!"

At Philadelphia at the Pennsylvania Station the agent simply said "Contains clothing and effects only," and handed me my check. Staten Island ferry and railroad held it up again, but a few words in the office cleared the air, and my beloved trunk reached home without further incident. Railroads are more liberal nowadays.



## XI

### ADVENTURES 1883-4

THE spring of 1883 found me still unsettled in mind and affairs, and with Biscayne Bay deeply rooted in my affections. During the summer I designed and had built by Brown a new and better sharpie, *Kingfish*, 33 feet long.

As none of my friends were ready for a Florida trip this year I advertised for a companion — the first and only time — and got one Thomas Dawley, who was an eccentric chap, knew nothing of sailing and was of little service or pleasure to me. He seemed so irresponsible that I consulted his father, who assured me that he was "harmless." On arrival at Biscayne Bay he stayed a little while at Peacock's and then drifted on to Key West. Later he turned out to have considerable capability as a newspaper correspondent, before and during the Spanish War, and had many adventures. At one time he was stood against the wall to be shot, at the Morro at Havana, but got clear somehow.

In December *Kingfish* was shipped on the schooner *W. H. Van Brunt*, Captain Haughwart, for St. Augustine, Dawley and I being passengers. The voyage was uneventful, though a bit rough; we lay at Staten Island a week for better weather before sailing, and off Cape Romaine had a gale which parted some of the schooner's old halyards and for a time threatened the loss of the *Kingfish*.

On the schooner, bound for St. Augustine, was another oddity named Benedict, son of a Broadway jeweler. He was definitely cracked, but not enough for an asylum. He had a wonderful outfit, including a large stock of theatrical costumes, to which he constantly added.





These two semi-lunatics amused Captain Haughwart and myself all the way down. They frequently "dressed up" and gave plays. They were fond of poker, and Dawley soon won all Benedict's property, but I made him return it at St. Augustine. On the voyage the Captain had charge of Benedict's money, while I held Dawley's.

At St. Augustine I called on Mr. Douglass, the mound-digger of the previous year on the Bay, and found him kind and hospitable. As soon as *Kingfish* was rigged, Dawley and I proceeded southward by the Matanzas River, now part of the East Coast Canal, to Matanzas Inlet.

Here we paid an interesting visit to a Mr. and Mrs. Allen of Bristol, Rhode Island, who had come to Matanzas in 1830. The old Spanish fort at this place, with its guns still in position and some of the hewn beams yet good, takes one back to the early Spanish days. Fort San Marco, now called Fort Marion, at St. Augustine, has been cared for, but also considerably altered, while this old ruin when we saw it was just as it had been left several centuries ago. It was entirely neglected for a long time after this, and began to go to pieces. I made many efforts to reach the proper authorities with suggestions for its preservation, and in recent years the government has partially repaired it and put it under guard.

Toward evening an offshore breeze tempted us out of Matanzas Inlet, but it soon died out and left us knocking about in some sea. After midnight it began breezing from the north, was shortly a fresh northeast gale, and by daylight a hard one, putting us under close reefs. The rapidly rising sea would have induced visions of an outside run, instead of the Mosquito Inlet and Indian River route, but for the fact that we had a sharpie under us.

It was near low water, which made conditions worse for an ordinary boat, though even at high tide the bar would have been impassable. At that time the channel crossed the bar at the extreme south end of the opening,



and ran through in a northwesterly direction, between two lines of breakers, and no craft, sail or power, could have negotiated it that morning.

With the sharpie, however, we picked out the shoalest looking spot at the north end, clear of the old boiler, took in the mainsail and headed for it. Good luck carried us in, just behind the first breaker, and before the second caught us we were safe in a foot or so of water, and an instant later high and dry, about half a mile from land. It was a precarious-looking position to an onlooker ashore, and so thought Captain Pacetti, the pilot, who immediately took steps toward a rescue. Had he known the possibilities of sharpies, and that we were making coffee, he would have been saved much trouble. He was a descendant of one of the Minorcans of the old Trumbull colony at New Smyrna.

By the time we had breakfasted the tide was springing fast, and we got overboard on each quarter and held her stern to the sea. In a short time she had driven over the shoal, and away we went up the river, passing Pacetti on his way to help us, and singing out our thanks for his good intentions. We could just catch his answer — "What in h — kind of boat have you there?" It is apparent that I introduced the type on the Florida coast.

The trip down the lagoons and Indian River was pleasant. Just above Jupiter Narrows we caught up with the old *Skipperree*, now owned by Mr. Charles Spencer, Superintendent of Houses of Refuge, who was on his annual inspection trip. He suggested that we keep in company, and as he appeared to be a pleasant and interesting man, we readily agreed, and thus began a friendship lasting for many years. Spencer had been a classmate of Secretary of State Folger and was a lawyer and student of philosophy; he had little qualification for the life-saving service except honest performance of his duties so far as he knew them. Finding that I was more or less familiar with the service, he called upon me for the





solving of many little practical questions for some years after. He was writing a book on philosophy and many a night I sat up past reasonable hours listening to his differences and agreements with Huxley, Spencer, Kant, Hume and others. It was over my head most of the time, but interesting all the same, and he was pleased to have an apt listener.

At Lake Worth we spent a pleasant night with Charley Moore, one of the reputed desperadoes of the Commissioners' meeting at Miami seven years before. When we left he gave me a bunch of bananas to deliver to Jack Peacock, then keeper of the New River House of Refuge. We crossed Lake Worth bar late in the afternoon and a moderate northwester took us along nicely until midnight, when it shifted north and began to blow. We turned in close reefs and scudded along, keeping a sharp eye out for the few landmarks of that low and monotonous coast. When one was close to the beach the Station Houses usually showed up against the sky line, and sometimes they kept a light burning, but with the sea then running we had hard work to pick out much of anything.

Hillsboro Rocks showed up well, however, by the white spray flying high in air, and we knew that New River House was just fourteen miles farther. We reached it about four, in the dark of the morning and just managed to see it. Rounding up (which was no joke), we hove to outside the breakers, and the vigorous blowing of our conch finally brought Jack out. Between the darkness and the roar of the surf he could not make out who we were or what we wanted until he thought of going a little way back of the beach ridge, away from the breakers, where he finally understood us. Next minute he was out in the surf with a lantern, we ran in as far as we dared, hove over the bananas and got out again safely. He got the fruit all right, though slightly damaged. I presume someone will say "Some trouble and risk for a few bananas," but my critic little understands the



spirit which prompts such things among pioneers, nor the value of small delicacies on that lonely coast.

Just after daylight on Christmas morning, in the brightness of a glorious sunrise, with the sea white with foam, we passed the Field and Osborn coconut-planting camp on what is now Miami Beach, where all hands waved to us. With Mrs. Field at that time was Miss Ella Mathieson, of Staten Island — an interested spectator; it is interesting to record that her nephew, Gordon Raymond, has been in recent years one of the best and keenest sailors on the Bay.

A few minutes later on Narres Cut Bar we shipped a breaker over the stern which filled us up, but quickly dropping sail, we were carried in by the strong flood tide. Once inside we bailed her out and headed for Coconut Grove and a hot breakfast.

The winter was a rather quiet one. It was saddened by the final illness of Mrs. Ewan, mother of J. W. Ewan, at Miami. She was a very fine woman, of a good old Charleston family, and with Mrs. Peacock's help had started the first "community uplift" work on the Bay, beginning with a Sunday school. Distances were great between Bay families, and the only conveyances were sailboats, so that much more than the simple school exercises had to be planned by the two unselfish women. Dinner was provided, the ailing ones doctored and comforted, and many other duties assumed that were more or less unusual and exacting, and all performed with the most loving care and patience. Their work should be recorded in the annals of our present-day women's clubs as the beginning of such labors on the Bay.

Mrs. Ewan suffered a long and painful illness, and all winter I carried Mrs. Peacock back and forth to Miami in the *Kingfish*, to nurse and comfort her. To Mrs. Peacock, "Aunt Bella," all her life came most of the sicknesses and family troubles, and she always responded, through sunshine, darkness or storm.





This winter we established the Fowey Rock News Packet Line. *Kingfish* sailed from Coconut Grove every Tuesday evening and returned Wednesday noon with papers and periodicals fresh from New York, only three days old, also bringing fish caught en route, drift lumber and any other odd prizes. Once we rolled twenty-two bales of cotton above high water on Key Biscayne and duly marked it, which netted us several hundred dollars for a few hours' work, and enabled the company to pay a dividend on the preferred stock! This was from the English steamer *Tregurno*, Galveston to Liverpool. She struck a reef on the Bahama Bank and jettisoned 2,300 bales of cotton which floated here. She afterward was beached north of Hillsboro and the *Emily B* collected \$1,100 salvage from her underwriters.

By leaving the Grove on Tuesday evening and spending the night at the Cape we were usually able to be out on the Reef the next morning when the liners leaving New York on Saturday afternoon made their appearance, unless delayed by the weather. (Through the Straits south bound ships travel close to the Reef to avoid the worst of the Gulf Stream current, thus passing within a mile or so of the lighthouse.) I previously made arrangements with their captains, propitiating them by sending them photographs of their ships passing, and they would have ready a bundle of reading matter, and sometimes a roast of meat, the latter under the delusion that we had little to eat ashore, or perhaps rather from the custom of making such gifts to the Reef Lights. All would be wrapped in canvas, with a piece of wood to float it, and thrown overboard aft, where we could cut in quickly and pick it up even before it got thoroughly wet, without danger of getting run down, or provoking the ire of the officer of the watch. In this we always seemed to be successful, for the hails to us were jovial and welcome. Such are the men of the sea!

We would then proceed to the Light and divide up the





booty. If it was too rough to get aboard the Light the keepers would pay out a heaving line and buoy; if too calm for us to get out in time, the keepers lowered their boat, spoke the steamer and whacked up with us later. This arrangement of pleasurable community work and occasional profit continued, with a few interruptions, until the arrival of the first mail train at Miami, and even that route did not beat ours by more than a few hours until some years later.

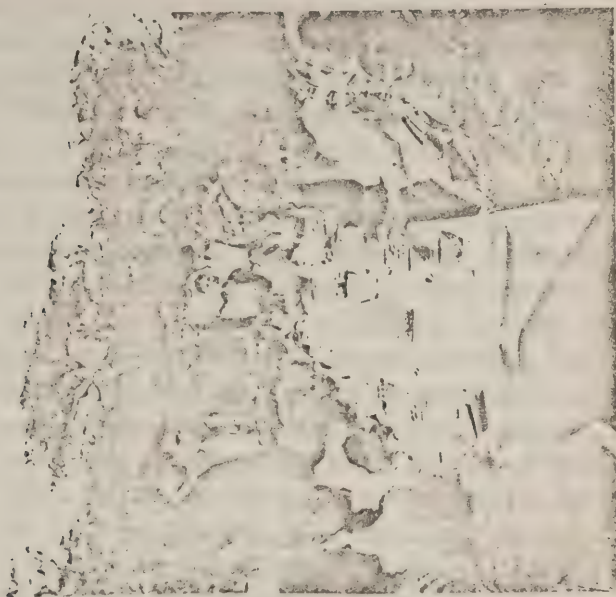
My relations with the officers of the various Key West and Gulf liners naturally became most friendly, and they were a fine set of men. I missed no chance for a pleasant talk with them, or for such small favors as I could do them, and they were always repaid many fold, in the newspapers delivered off Fowey Rock and in many other ways.

This reminds me of Captain Pennington of the Clyde Line between Jacksonville and New York. After the completion of the railroad between Miami and the city just mentioned, I was bound northward with Pennington and was carrying a number of our fine Dade County mangos with me. I noticed on the first day out, when walking past the Captain's room, a few rather poor specimens of this fruit lying on his window-sill in the sun, apparently to ripen. On the Captain's next appearance I questioned him about this fruit. "Yes," said he, "I am trying to ripen them, such as they are, in time for my arrival home. I have a bed-ridden wife who is very fond of mangos and at the south end of my route, in proper season, I am usually lucky enough to pick up a few from the Bahama schooners that trade there. This time hardly any worth buying were available." Watching my chance till nearly dark I succeeded in transferring some of my luscious "Haden's" to his window-sill, chucking the others overboard. Unsuspecting, the skipper took mine in for the night and replaced them in the sun the next morning, but as he afterwards





MARK ("JACK") GAZE  
Relative of Nelson, bluecoat boy, sailor, lightkeeper



DINNER TIME AT SUNDAY SCHOOL





told me was "mighty astonished at the wonderful improvement that sunning had done them." And then on the last day with a few extras for good measure in my pocket I watched for a chance towards dark and got caught in the act. The transformation was just a little too great, as was the miraculous growth. Captain Jim was laying for the magician whom he thanked for his dear sick wife while he grasped both of my hands in his.

It was during these visits to the Light that I made the acquaintance of Mark Gaze, commonly called "Jack," one of the keepers; a romantic figure, who proved a good friend. He attracted my attention by his fine face and bearing, and by his little shelf of books, which were of the best. He was reticent as to his history, but I finally drew out the story. Related to Lord Nelson's family, and orphaned at an early age, he was sent to the old Bluccoat School in London. Then, because of standing in the way of some estate settlement, he was apprenticed at sea in the hope that its dangers would solve the difficulty. A few years afterward he deserted at Key West with a companion, Philip Cosgrove, and both became spongers and wreckers. Cosgrove died a much respected commander of lighthouse and buoy vessels.

Jack was of a more convivial turn, and up to the time of our acquaintance had not risen higher than assistant light-keeper, with no prospects of further advancement. He usually spent his quarterly vacations having a "beautiful" time at Key West. We began inviting him ashore at these periods, and seeing that he got there and back again, and eventually Mr. Gaze had saved money, bought land, and was promoted to head keeper of Rebecca Shoal light. Much to his and our regret he left Fowey Rock for his new position, but only long enough, as he said, to accumulate a little more capital, so that he could live comfortably with us who had lent him a hand toward better things.



It was not to be. He was taken sick in that most remote of places, with only one other keeper and a gale blowing, and nothing could be done. The trouble proving acute, it fortunately was soon over with, and poor old Jack was buried by his comrade on East Key, Tortugas.

So we lost a most companionable friend of the real British old-school sailor type, with a fund of sea yarns innumerable and pointed. When the subject of gales came up he would look bored, and relate how he once scudded in a dismasted vessel under a spike stuck up on the to'gallant fo'castle, with the ship's carpenter standing by with a top-maul to drive it home in squalls. How about the carpenter? No answer!

Throughout this winter I was casting about for some industry for the people of the Bay which might have value and permanence, until quick transportation should warrant fruit-growing. Destructive distillation of the heavy pitch-pine (the Caribbean Pine, confined to the lower end of the peninsula) seemed worth attention, and I had it looked into by experts, without success. Had the resultant charcoal been of value, or if present prices could have been obtained for the other products, there might have been a chance for it.

There were deposits of white marl which when properly washed made a good whiting, but the costs of handling were prohibitive. I also got interested in a yellow ocher which occurred in the edges of the Everglades, and found that I could get from it a range of colors almost from vermilion to burnt umber, by roasting — the bright reds by high heat in the open, the umbers in partial vacuum. The deposits were small and scattered, however, and again the physical difficulties were fatal.

We thought of the canning of kingfish, crawfish or pineapples, but there were many problems to work out in that business. Further investigation of coconuts confirmed my earlier conviction that even the rare frosts of this latitude so impaired the quality of the nuts as to make





them unprofitable. Besides this, local labor was scant, and in any case could not possibly compete with the experts of the West Indies and the South Seas, who husked a thousand or two nuts in a day by hand, for a wage of something like forty cents! And so it went.

I had promised Dr. J. B. Holder<sup>1</sup> of the American Museum of Natural History in New York to keep an eye open for his interests, and hearing reports of a large crocodile up the Bay, we went to investigate.

We had only recently realized that the brackish waters of this part of the coast harbored real crocodiles, quite distinct from the alligators, who confine themselves to the fresh water. In fact, the two keep strictly to their own bailiwicks, usually fighting savagely if they chance to meet.<sup>2</sup>

We found his lordship in Arch Creek, a short distance from its mouth, sunning himself on the south bank, and made several vain attempts to net him. Finally I got the grains into his neck and he went to the bottom in eight feet of water, with his head under a ledge. We got two other lines around his tail, bent over a large sapling, made the lines fast to it, and left him for the night.

Next morning he had tired of holding against the strain and was out on clear bottom. Another line was slipped over his head, and then, taking turns around the fore and main masts of the *Kingfish*, we began heaving in. That fool reptile, with strength and jaws able to tear the little boat into kindling wood, never did a thing until we had him too short alongside to get a lick at us, and then something was doing every minute for the next half-hour, until he was exhausted. Rolling up on the lines, he would almost capsize the sharpie, while Charley Peacock and I

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Holder was the father of C. F. Holder, of California, author of books on nature and sports.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Henshall, while in the Bay on the *Rambler* in 1881, preserved the skull of what he called a large alligator which afterward aroused great interest among the 'gator hunters of the Gulf Coast because of its radical differences in shape from any alligator they had ever seen. This was obviously a crocodile.





climbed out on the other side. Then, finding that his teeth were gouging chunks out of her cedar planking, I got a rope-yarn slip-noose ready, and watching for a chance, got it around his jaws. This seemed to discourage him and he lay quiet.

So we had him alive; but what should we do with him? Had we known that there was a buyer in New York ready to give thousands for one of his size, 14 feet 8 inches, we would soon have had him in a crate and on the way. But thinking of the Museum, and of a previous experience when an eight-foot crocodile, supposedly dead, had come to life in a twelve-foot skiff, and came within an ace of throwing three of us overboard in a crocodile-hole where I had seen twenty at once, we finally concluded that the only good crocodile was a dead one. So we ended his career with a rifle-ball and after much rigging of purchases got him aboard. He weighed close to 1,200 pounds.

He was several years in getting before the public, as the following letter shows:

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

NEW YORK, Nov. 19, 1887.

*Dear Mr. Munroe:*

The crocodile is on exhibition, arrived last evening. It is superb. Ward has done his level best, and you will say it is a beauty. Mr. Jessup<sup>1</sup> is delighted. He could hardly get it into his head that the old dried-up skin is now in such good shape.

The creature measures fourteen feet eight inches, and dwarfs the alligator which I have placed alongside. The latter is the largest I have ever seen, measuring eleven feet ten inches. Come and see.

Yours,

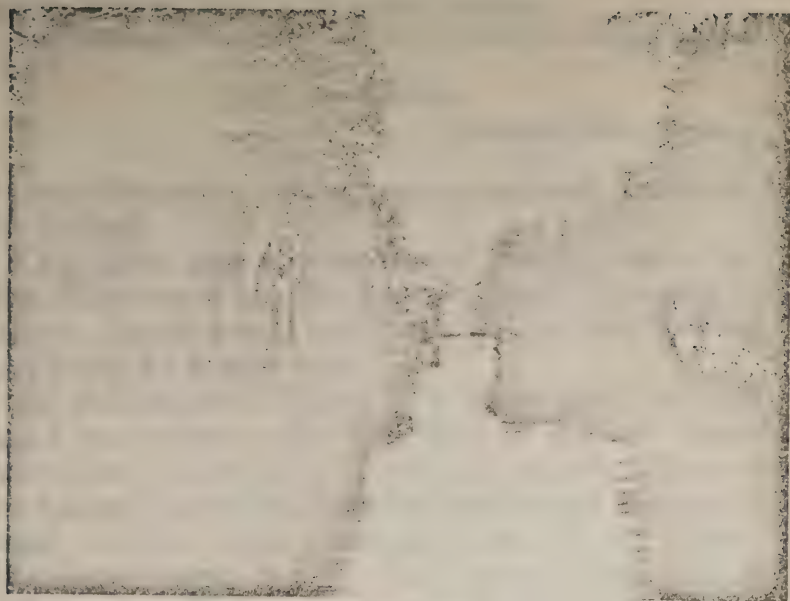
J. B. HOLDER.

At a later date Dr. Bashford Dean of the Museum concluded a letter as follows:

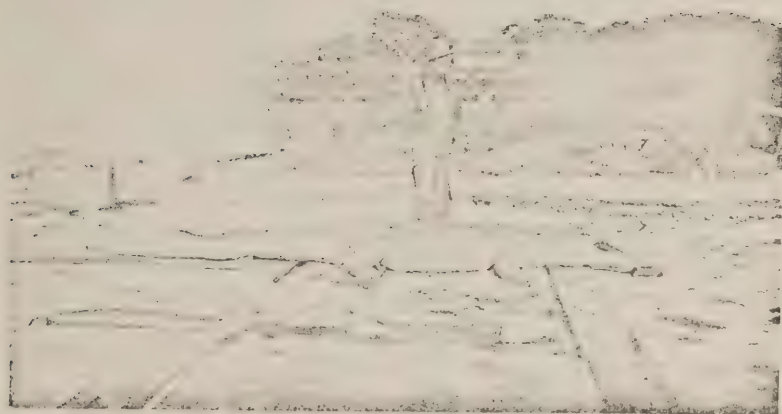
. . . You have already been so kind in giving us the splendid crocodile and the head of the great alligator, that we look upon you as

<sup>1</sup>Morris K. Jessup who paid the costs of shipment and mounting, and is therefore registered as the donor.





UP ARCH CREEK



THE COMMODORE, THE FIFTEEN-FOOT CROCODILE AND AN ALLIGATOR ON THE  
PEACOCK INN BEACH





an hereditary friend of the Museum, with the right, title and privilege of being bothered by us on all possible occasions.

With best souvenir of your visit with us, and with cordial regards,  
I am

Yours ever faithfully,

BASHFORD DEAN, *Curator.*

So our efforts seem to have been appreciated, besides the fun we had!

This winter again one yacht, and one only, visited the Bay. This time it was the schooner *Ranger* belonging to John A. Morris bound from New York to New Orelans, and put in for harbor only.

On the last day of March Mrs. Ewan died, and next day I took schooner for Key West on the way home. After a few pleasant days in company with the officers of the United States ships *Vandalia*, *Swatara* and *Tennessee*, I sailed for New York, on April 9, on the *San Marcos*. The Coast Survey party, whose camp I had seen at Hillsboro on Christmas eve on the way down, were fellow passengers and their company was much enjoyed. Among them were Collona, Borden, Dervey, Wyman, Taney and Crowell.



## XII

### PHOTOGRAPHS, 1884-5

A GREAT part of the summer of 1884 was spent on board the *Anemone*, now renamed *Domino*, as the guest of her new owner, Mr. Gilbert Haight. We went on the New York Yacht Club cruise, and in the runs from port to port held our own well with the racers — so well, in fact, that Mr. Haight put up with his friends in the fleet quite a stake that *Domino* could beat the fleet on time allowance to Newport the next day.

The weather turned out foggy, with a fresh southeast breeze and little prospect of a start, but a temporary lifting of the fog got all hands under way, and there was no recall, so away we went. Most of the larger craft were afraid of Watch Hill Reef and stood out into the Race, but we, with several others, went through Fisher's Island Sound, past Watch Hill, around Point Judith, in past Fort Adams, and anchored at Newport, without getting a sight of the land the whole distance. We were nearly the first of the fleet, only a few of the large craft ahead of us, so Haight won his bet in good shape. I might mention that the dinner that night was a good one, with all the extras!

In August while I was at New Bedford, my father died suddenly. All efforts to locate me failed, and I learned of it only on reaching Staten Island shortly before the funeral at Concord, Massachusetts, where I arrived just in time for the services. This was a sad blow. Although old age and reverses in fortune had made him a little eccentric, he was to me, as he had always been, the most lovable of parents.

This summer some of my photo prints at W. C. Cullen's photo-supply house in William Street attracted the



attention of Mr. Thomas A. Hine, who also patronized Mr. Cullen, and he asked for an introduction. This led to a lasting friendship with the Hine family, which has been one of the delights of my life.

These views were mostly of south Florida, in which Mr. Hine had taken an interest, and in the fall he and his brother, Edward, expressed a wish to accompany me south. We sailed on the Mallory steamship *Lampassas* for Key West, where Alf and Charley Peacock were to meet us with the *Kingfish*. They were there to the minute and young Johnny Frow was also there in a small schooner, *Adelaide*, bound for the Bay.

John being a good sport, suggested that he could beat any flat-bottomed craft in the head-wind then blowing down the Reef, and the fun began, both boats standing out around Fort Taylor in the growing darkness, and pitching into the short seas of the Hawk Channel with sails reefed. The Hines, being accustomed to daylight sailing around Vineyard Haven, their summer home, were a trifle disturbed at thus banging along the Reef to windward in the dark, especially as the chart showed no end of rocks awash, and sharpie sailing was new to them, besides. They had grit, however, and said nothing until afterward, when they admitted it to be the wildest sailing they had ever done or heard of!

Long and short legs it proved to be, and soon losing sight of the schooner we pounded away all night and by morning were laying our course in smooth water inside the keys, via Bahia Honda Channel. At Lower Matecumbe, the wind having hauled a bit, we beat out to the Hawk Channel again, and starting sheets, away we went, romping past the Hen and Chickens; by noon we were through Cæsar's Creek, and landed at the Grove long before supper. Rattling good time for a small boat for 150 miles, 40 of which were to windward. Frow and the *Adelaide* did not show up for many hours.

The Peacocks at Bay View Villa were now making a





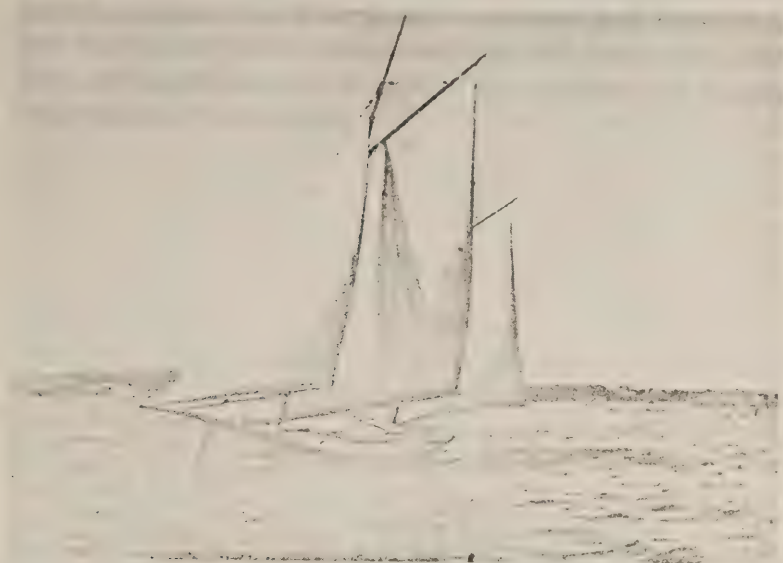
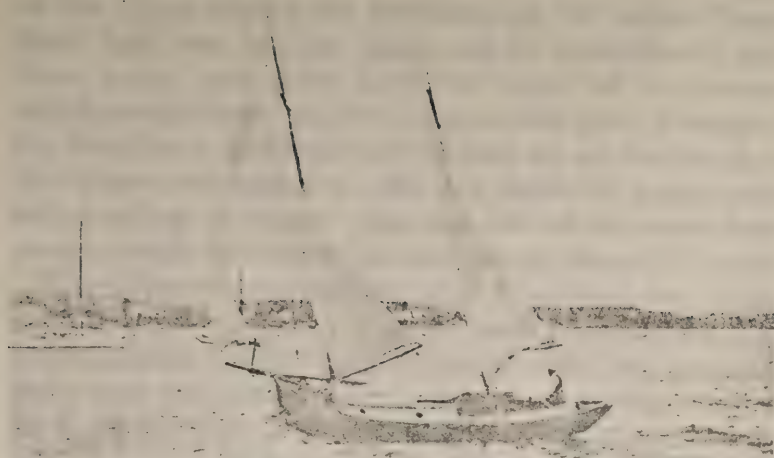
bid for Northern trade, and the Hines and I had the honor of inaugurating it. The winter was spent very enjoyably, showing the newcomers all the points of interest within reach in *Kingfish*, and they were delighted with everything. They finally bought Long Key, already partly planted with coconut trees by Messrs. Fogarty and Filer of Key West, and returned north in the spring to arrange for the following winter's work in completing the planting.

One of the memorable adventures of *Kingfish* was the discovery of the present channel across Cape Florida bar. The bar extended southward from the Cape, apparently unbroken, nearly to Soldier Key, showing continuous breakers. Vessels usually rounded these sand-bores and followed them up, inside, to the Cape Channel.

One very quiet day I was drifting slowly down along the outside of the bar, scanning the bottom, which lay clear through the smooth surface even without a water-glass, when my eye was caught by a bar of metal on the sand. I plunged the ready sponge-hook down upon it and managed to fish it up, finding it a heavy copper drift-bolt; part of it was afterward built into the sundial now on the lawn of my home, the "Barnacle."

Looking for further wreckage, I found nothing but a large pile of small stones, evidently dumped there. I got hold of a few of them, and they suggested ore; afterward I found they were actually a rather low-grade ore, containing both silver and copper. There was a large heap, which might have been the cargo, or ballast, of a vessel. It lay on the outer edge of the sand-bores, in about twelve feet of water, and as I examined it on all sides I was surprised to see that on the south this depth continued around the pile, into the line of the bar. Heading west, I followed this deep water, and it led me straight across into the entrance of the Cape channel. There, most surprisingly, was an excellent entrance to the Bay, some three feet deeper than the route around the end of





"PRESTO" IN GREAT KILLS





the bar, and entirely unknown to the local pilots and captains.

I reported this to Joe Frow, who had been light-keeper on the Cape during the hurricane of '76, when Fowey Rock light was not yet built, and he immediately said these rocks must have been the cargo of a schooner which went ashore on the bores in that gale. Several of her crew were drowned and washed up on the beach of the Cape next morning. She lay there for some years before going to pieces; then the pile of ore must have made an eddy which cut out the passage through the bar.

The skippers were still skeptical. I reported the "Munroe Channel" to Harry Fozzard and John Myers, who were running freight boats to Jacksonville, but both said there must be some mistake, as there were always breakers all along the bar. In the opening this was of course only tide-rip, which had completely disguised the channel for nine years! At length Fozzard took soundings, then notified the Lighthouse Board, who surveyed and buoyed it, and then everybody abandoned the old route for good. The ore is still there, the piles of the present red beacon being driven through it.



### XIII

#### *PRESTO*, 1885

AT GREAT KILLS in the summer of 1885 I designed *Presto* — a “round bilged sharpie” — something quite new in the sailing craft line — and superintended her building at Brown’s yard. The New Haven sharpie, a flat-bottomed and sided craft, with very light draft, had by this time established a great local reputation for speed and easy handling, but lacked extreme stability for seagoing use, besides which the flat bottom pounded heavily in a seaway. Several builders, especially Clapham of Roslyn, Long Island, had tried improvements, but they were not successful. My attempt, during construction, and even after launching, met with no favorable comment whatever, but when ballasted and tried out, proved to be one of the most serviceable vessels I ever had to do with.

During the international yacht races of 1886 one of the days appointed was so rough and windy off Sandy Hook that the race was postponed. Early that morning I had left Great Kills in *Presto* with only a boy as crew, to view the race. Proceeding outside the bar, we waited for signs of the competitors, but all we saw was the judges’ boat, a powerful tug, coming out to look at the conditions. Every other sea swept her fore and aft, while we were under full sail and quite comfortable. When she was abreast of us one of the pilot-house windows was lowered a bit, and someone waved a handkerchief.

The next day I received a note from Louis Bayard, then Secretary of the Seawanhaka-Corinthian Yacht Club, asking an appointment for myself and *Presto*, and saying that he was the one who had waved to me. He had made a bet with A. Carey Smith, who was also on board,



that *Presto* drew only twenty-seven inches of water, Smith having declared that no boat of that beam and draft could possibly show the sail she was carrying that day and make such good weather of it. The appointment was made, and Bayard, Smith and Phil Ellsworth, another well-known designer, came down to Great Kills, and after an hour or so inspecting *Presto* and talking boat, Smith paid Bayard the bet.

This *Presto*-type<sup>1</sup> has aroused many discussions and controversies in the past forty years, the last of which was between F. A. Fenger, Henry Howard and others, in the Cruising Club and the pages of the yachting magazines during 1926.

It was the direct and necessary result of my interest in Florida where shoal waters put a great premium on extreme light draft. But my interest in the centerboard type and its performance at sea had been growing almost from the beginning of my sailing days. The centerboard schooners frequently used in the old West Indian fruit trade always aroused interest and comment, and some of them were enthusiastically championed, as against their keel rivals, by skippers who were certainly keen sailors of wide experience, while their business required "cracking on" at all seasons, and some of them were Englishmen, born and bred in the tradition of deep keel craft.

One of the main advantages of the shoal-draft boat in deep water is her light weight, which gives her the agility of a nimble boxer in her contest with the sea. She is quick to lift at the impact of a wave, rising lightly over its crest, instead of standing stolidly to have it break over her. This not only makes her ride dry and comfortable, where the "lead-mine" would be swept by every sea, and

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Commodore's greatest achievement—certainly so from the yachtsman's standpoint. Almost every one of these boats—about twenty-five in all—was built primarily because shoal draft was a necessity in Florida, but ended by convincing her owner that she had many advantages at sea as well. A full technical description of *Presto* as published in "Yachting" for November, 1926, appears in the appendix, page 375. V. G.





must depend only on tight ports and hatches to keep herself afloat, but, still more important, the wrenching strains which inevitably accompany the labors of the deep boat are almost entirely avoided, and the light boat will come through a severe test unracked, her seams as solid as when the calker finished them.

The deep boat, held down by the inertia of her keel, cannot quickly lift to the sea; the full weight of the wave must envelop her and put forth its lifting power to uproot her keel from the depths, before she can struggle free of it. Conversely, once started upward, she leaps high above the crest, to fall with the greater shock into the next trough. There is also a similar contrast in horizontal strains, for the keel holds a craft rigid by its deep anchorage, and her topsides cannot yield to the onslaughts of the wave-crests, but must simply stand and take them, while the light shoal boat does not have to thus fight against herself, but ducks and dodges the worst of the sea.

The issue has been unfortunately clouded by the fact that many of the skimming dishes and sharpies of fifty years ago (then the only shoal-draft boats) were extremes, with scant ballast and small range of stability, and were properly condemned. I saw the possibilities of the sharpie for the Florida coast, however, used them with great satisfaction, and finally developed *Presto* from them. For many years after I finally sold her, she was a favorite in the Southern Yacht Club at New Orleans, and I used to receive periodical letters from her owner, singing her praises and mine for having designed her. I quote one of these received in September, 1926, from L. D. Sampsell of New Orleans:

*Dear Commodore Munroe:*

*Presto* was superiorly designed, superlatively built, and splendidly named. In my fond recollections of the dandy little ship I cannot defer even to the affection you must have for her.

Everyone around this neck of the old ocean was impressed with her oft-proven ableness. She was very buoyant and pleasingly snappy,



after the manner of light shoal boats. She was not slow by any means and could be maneuvered quickly and joyfully, I'll say, when there was anything like a capful o' wind. She was an ideal, easily handled, safe and sure cruiser for our shoal — and, offshore — deep and rugged waters.

This work of yours of 1885, *Commodore*, was more than a third of a century ahead of her time, when we consider what the designers should now be coming to — an easily driven, light draft, lightly ballasted, sweet-lined hull, with reasonably narrow beam, the right free-board, and the properly placed large heavy centerboard, which can be driven with a light, easily handled sail-spread, or by the less cumbersome engines.

Shallow draft is most convenient for more than seventy-five per cent of our coast from Nova Scotia to Mexico. Having had some experience and read practically all the published literature of the sport, I do not believe that the smallish deep boat with ponderous ballast on a short keel is the safest and fastest vessel for any kind of deep-water use, anywhere, anytime, in any weather!

L. D. SAMPSELL





## XIV

### BOTANY AND FISHING, 1885-6

THE Hines wishing a boat for Florida, in the summer of 1885 the Browns built for them a fine 41-foot sharpie, *Pelican*, which had a trial trip down the Sound and in November was shipped to Jacksonville by schooner. With the Hines I followed, by steamer to Savannah and train to Jacksonville, and as the cars rolled onto the old terminal wharf a heaving-line flew across it from the schooner with the sharpie aboard. This was about noon, and before dark the *Pelican* was launched, rigged, and sailed 25 miles down the river to Mayport — “snappy work,” as they now say! The sail down to the Bay was uneventful, and after a short stop at the Grove the Hines were off to their coconut-planting on Long Key.

A pleasant incident of this winter was the visit of the late Charles Sargent, the well-known botanist, with Mrs. Sargent and Mr. Codman, on the lighthouse tender *Laurel*. In their company I spent a pleasant week, and acquired more technical knowledge of the country's floral beauties than I had dreamed of. Among other things I showed them a royal palm grove in the mangrove swamp south of Little River which delighted Sargent extremely, though the labor of reaching it was too much for the rest of the party. One of the old settlers a few years before had accidentally stumbled on some of these palms, strange to him, while hog-hunting, and told me of them. No other royal palms were known except on the inaccessible Long Key in the southern 'Glades (more recently called Key) and a few on the West Coast; so with Mr. Peacock and others I traversed that swamp for two days, but in vain. Finally, when the others



had given up, I went back alone, and in a few minutes found the palms and photographed the best.<sup>1</sup>

I cannot describe the feelings of a nature-lover on first seeing these palms surrounded by mangrove swamp; worship comes nearest to it. My picture was sent to Dr. Holder in New York and published in the "Scientific American"; since there was no general knowledge that this palm grew in the United States it aroused much interest. After the purchase of my present home in the spring of 1886 I planted a number of these palms, some of which thrive, and are now the oldest on private grounds in the county.

On the departure of the *Laurel*, Mr. Codman promised me copies of some of their photographs, but as time passed without word of them, I dismissed the matter as forgotten. Twelve years afterwards he walked into the boathouse one day and simply said "Good morning. Here are those pictures!" We had just been rigging a South Sea Island proa which interested him greatly, and reminded him of a sketch of one which he had made in Ceylon many years previously. This he promised to send me, and I remarked that I would expect it in another twelve years as a pleasant surprise; but this time his promise was redeemed in a couple of weeks.

In the seven years from 1881 to 1888, only three yachts entered the Bay, although commercial and government vessels were frequent visitors. By a strange coincidence, in each case the yachts brought people who were themselves strangers to me, but several of whose relatives and friends were also friends of mine. Mr. John A. Morris and party came first on the *Ranger*. I did not meet him at that time, but when he returned for a second visit on the *Cora*, I spent a pleasant evening on board and found that I knew many of the people associated with the days of his youth. With him on this trip were his niece, Miss Broad-

<sup>1</sup> These photos, enlarged, are hanging in the halls of the Administration Building of the Arnold Arboretum, where Dr. Sargent is still in charge (1925).



wood, and also General Jubal A. Early, an ex-commander of the Confederate Army. Mrs. Morris and her daughter, Cora, had left the yacht at St. Augustine on account of illness and were to proceed overland.

This winter (1886) the third yacht visited the Bay, the steam-yacht *Magnolia*, with Mr. and Mrs. Fairman Rogers of Philadelphia. They were very pleasant folk, and I spent most of their week's stay on *Magnolia*, showing them all the points of interest. On the evening of their last day Mrs. Rogers gave me a book and asked my address, which I gave as Stapleton, Staten Island. She remarked that Stapleton was the surname of a favorite aunt of hers, Elizabeth Stapleton Gilpin, and I told her that the same Mrs. Gilpin was a very good friend of my mother's and mine, and spoke of renting her house on Staten Island. I did not get ashore that night until a late hour.<sup>1</sup>

While visiting the Hines this winter on Long Key we discovered on its east end great numbers of what appeared to be small royal palms; we afterward learned that Professor Sargent had found isolated specimens on other keys, and that it was a new variety named by him *Pseudo-phoenix Sargenti*.

During the same visit we had a norther which brought the mercury down to 36 degrees and next morning we picked up on the beach a wonderful assortment of sea-life which we photographed, greatly regretting that their marvelous colors could not be recorded. A print was sent to Dr. Holder, as usual, and his letter to the "Evening Post" is worth quoting:

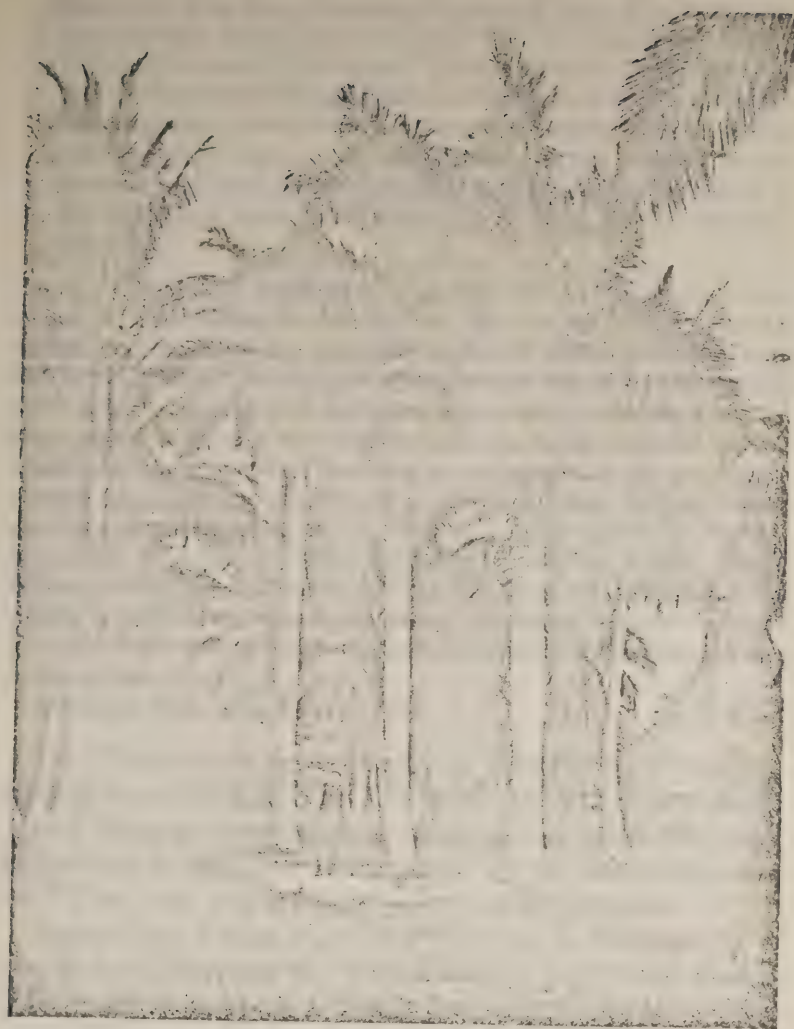
*Editor Evening Post:*

It may prove interesting as a matter of record to preserve the following extraordinary facts. It is thought that there is no record of the thermometer passing so low as 30 degrees Fahrenheit on the Florida Reef. Our friend Mr. Ralph M. Munroe, of Gifford's Station,

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Rogers was Miss Rebecca Gilpin, a favorite cousin of my father's. V. G.







THREE OF THE ROYAL PALM SEEDLINGS  
Planted 1886, photographed 1906



S. I., who spends the winters at Miami, near Cape Florida, writes as follows:

"We have had the most boisterous cold winter so far that I have ever seen here. At both Miami and Long Key there was frost enough to kill young coconut trees and many vegetables, although it came in spots only. It now looks as if someone had gone around with a torch, and selecting certain trees and shrubs here and there, fired them. Ice formed in shallow vessels about a quarter of an inch in thickness, much to the surprise of the natives, who had never seen such a thing before. I enclose a photograph of some fish I picked up on Long Key on the cold morning."

Large numbers of dead fishes were reported on the beaches elsewhere. The photograph taken by Mr. Munroe shows twenty-seven distinct species. They are tastefully arranged with a border of sea-feathers and other soft corals. A young hawks-bill turtle and a small shark are introduced, and numerous sea-urchins, star-fish, etc., are interspersed to form a very interesting picture, all gathered on the beach after the cold snap. There are several species of the gorgeously colored angel-fishes, a surgeon-fish, with an artificial-looking lancet on either side of his tail, cow-fish, file-fish, grunts, bill-fish, moray eel, trunk-fish, all familiar to the sojourner in tropical waters. Their brilliant colors give additional attraction to the coral lagoons, but are wholly unfamiliar elsewhere, not being represented in colder waters.<sup>1</sup> The unfriendly chill of the too-far-advanced cold wave brings myriads to the surface to die.

Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. Feb. 8, 1886.

J. B. H.

Dr. Holder was an authority on Florida Reef matters, having been stationed at Key West and the Tortugas as Army Surgeon during part of the Civil War. His contributions to "Harper's Monthly," in the early seventies, on "The Reef and its Life" are very interesting.

Some time before this the Peacocks, in recognition of my help in starting the Inn business and other things, had given me a piece of land north of the Inn, on what is now McFarlane Street. Some of this I cleared and planted, and parts of it I later presented to the Congregational

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that even when preserved alive in aquariums, these fish lose most of the brilliance of their colors, and become a very different thing from the living rainbows of the Reef. V. G.





Church, the Housekeeper's Club and the Public Library. All these organizations were first in their fields on the Bay, with the exception of a Roman Catholic mission chapel up the Miami River, which in the early days was visited by a wandering priest a few times a year. The Second Congregational pastor was the Rev. S. L. Merrick, who had retired to a little place back "in the sticks" as the pineland was called. He named his home "Coral Gables," and it was this old name which his son, George Merrick, made so famous in boom days with his spectacular city of Coral Gables, which grew in less than ten years from a grapefruit plantation to a large municipality.

I now realized that I should be more of a landholder and started negotiations for what was left of the Frow property, originally the Beasley homestead. It will be remembered that this tract, 160 acres, was sold to Frow about 1876 for \$100, and offered to me in 1881 for \$350. This spring, 1886, about half the tract remained in the Frows' hands, and the best bargain I could make for this was \$400 cash and the sharpie *Kingfish* to boot, value \$400 more, and I doubt if the deal would have gone through then had not the speed and handiness of the boat aroused the admiration and desire of Frow. It is apparent that the growth of land values on the Bay did not await the coming of the railroad! This spot soon after became my permanent home. *Kingfish*, by the way, though with another name, held her own in the fishing fleet under Frow's command for more than a third of a century.

The mention of fishing recalls one of my first experiences. We were told of the kingfishing off Bear Cut buoy and on the Cape Florida sand-bores, and having a supply of our Northern tin bluefish squids, we went off for a trial. The buoy grounds showed no fish, but a fair lot were caught at the sand-bores, and several times afterward we had about the same luck. There was, of course,



no market for the fish at this time, and no other boats came out except the Brickells' *Ada* and an occasional dinghy when the wind was offshore.

One day something impelled me to follow the edge of the stream northward, and some four miles north of Narres Cut we struck the fish in such numbers and size that the boat was loaded to the safety limit in a few minutes. So voracious were they that we could pay out only a few feet of line before the squid was taken. We reached Miami at noon with 133 kingfish, having been out only a few hours altogether. The crew, the boat from end to end, and even the sails up to the second reef, were one slimy mess of blood and gurry! This was the discovery of the present northern fishing grounds.

After a hard job of cleaning (we afterward stripped the boat and sank her in shoal water to complete the job), we sailed up the Bay blowing the conch to call the settlers, and parceled out the fish among them for salting. This got to be a regular Thursday event while the fish ran, but never again did we try to catch all we could.

Early this year while returning from a fishing trip I noticed two men on the beach at the Punch Bowl, apparently strangers, which was an event in those days. I sailed in closer, and was hailed by one of them, who proved to be Mr. Ewan of Fort Dallas. He asked me to come ashore and meet another Munroe, and thus I became acquainted with Kirk Munroe, whom I had known by reputation but never met. It seems that being in Key West with his wife he heard of a Munroe on Biscayne Bay, and came up to investigate. His first impressions of the country were evidently favorable, for he soon brought Mrs. Munroe from Key West, and they looked about for a piece of land to build on. Eventually they bought a tract south of my new purchase and built a home which they named the "Scrububs" and occupied, with additions, until recent years.

This was about the beginning of Kirk Munroe's great





popularity as a boys' writer, and as Mrs. Munroe was a daughter of Amelia Barr, both had many interesting friends and associations, and they added much to the life of the Bay. Mr. Munroe had with him two Harper boys (sons of his publishers) whom he tutored all that winter. Later he helped in establishing a boys' school, under Mr. Paul Ransom, which is now the Adirondack-Florida School.

Munroe had left his Barnegat sneak-box, *Alligator*, at Lake Worth the previous winter, and now wanted to go after her. As I was to take Charley Peacock, then tax-collector, to Lake Worth on his round of the northern end of the county, we all sailed north on *Kingfish*. Off Hillsboro Rocks, however, a northeaster struck in, and we had to take shelter in the inlet. Hillsboro Rocks, which show on the coast at this point, are the most prominent of the few scattered conglomerates found along the Florida seacoast, which show a gradual diminution southerly to the oölitic or coral reef formation and northerly to the coquina at St. Augustine. The Hillsboro clump is situated in the surf making a fine landmark by day or night against the otherwise monotonous sand beaches, and they were much appreciated by the old-time voyagers. They were, in fact, the lone rock sentinels of the American coast, between Block Island on the northeast and the Rio Grande on the southwest.

Next morning the gale continued, so Munroe and I took the dinghy and rowed up the Hillsboro in search of Indians, but found only their old camps, plentifully supplied with fleas. Then, walking over to the beach, we were surprised to see what appeared to be tents up toward Boca Raton Rocks, where there had formerly been an inlet. A four-mile walk brought us there, and we found the Field and Osborn coconut planters — a camp of fifteen or twenty men — whom we had supposed to be nowhere in that vicinity. Mrs. Field and two little girls had accompanied her husband, and all were much sur-





prised and pleased to have visitors. They insisted that we share their good dinner, and in parting Mrs. Field presented us with a nice frosted cake, freshly baked, which we carried back with great care. Before dark we were aboard the *Kingfish* where Peacock had another good dinner ready, and when, at its close, we produced the cake to top off with, his astonishment was worth seeing, for we were supposed to be entirely out of reach of any such dainty!

The northeaster continuing, on the third day Peacock and Munroe decided to walk the beach to the Lake, while I remained with the boat. Two days later Peacock returned with Captain E. N. Dimmick, one of the County Commissioners, and a mighty footsore prospector named Douglass. A nice offshore breeze carried us down the coast that night, and we were at home for breakfast.

This beach-walking was a most deceptive business, and by no means a pleasure jaunt. With low tide and smooth water it looked easy, but even then one's inshore leg soon began to tire by reason of the slope, and as the rising tide drove the walker up into the soft sand it became unbearable to the most hardy, and camp had to be made. Those with experience could find a slight trail on the level just back of the beach crest, through the coarse grass, and this, though soft and uninviting, was far the best.

Novices underwent great hardships in crossing streams, from insects at night, want of water and food, and fear of reptiles and beasts. Occasional short distances could be passed by boat on the lagoons inside, if arrangements had been made with the keepers of the various Houses of Refuge, twenty-five miles apart, but this was rare. Ordinarily the several inlets had to be crossed by wading on the outer bar at low water, if not too rough, or by swimming the river inside, and several people lost their lives in so doing. More than one of these fatalities was ascribed to the sharks which swarmed in the inlets on the



ebb tide, but there never has been an absolutely authenticated attack by a shark on the Florida coast, and it is more likely that exhaustion and a strong current were responsible. As a matter of fact, the barracuda has a more vicious reputation than the shark.

To those well broken in, the walk was not so bad, and there was the mitigating possibility of finding something of value washed ashore — though I never knew of a beachcomber retiring with a fortune! The paper nautilus was often found, and good specimens were valuable; I once passed a large lump of ambergris, thinking it old tallow until I later learned more of the subject. "Long John" Holman, who lived on the Miami at the time of my first visit, carried the mail down the beach from St. Augustine to Biscayne Bay during the Seminole Wars, walking only by night, and mail was carried from Lake Worth to the Bay on foot until the railroad was built. Tax-collectors, County Commissioners, Judges, jurors, witnesses and others on county business had either to take this walk, risk their lives in the open boats at sea, or go many hundreds of miles around by way of Key West, Tampa and Titusville.

Personally I never walked the whole of this beach; the New Haven sharpie solved the problem. Finally I built a modification of the type — *Egret*, of which more hereafter — which could make these trips and run the inlets in almost any weather. I remember beating out of Lake Worth Inlet one morning in a strong east wind, with all of north Dade County taxes in a salt-bag, the collector sitting in the bottom of the craft and hanging onto both sides while we worked our way through two lines of breakers. Though we started rather late, we were home at the Grove in time for supper. This was after waiting at the Lake for two days for the wind to moderate. The man with a car on the fine roads of today can appreciate little or nothing of such a sail.

By these routes came many of the settlers before the





railway entered the country. Some never arrived, or left their chattels rolling in the surf somewhere alongshore. Just before the railroad a "county road" was completed by which the trip from Lake Worth could be made in two days, stopping overnight at Stranahan's Camp, at New River. Few ever traveled this very rough road, however, and before it was improved the railroad went through to Miami, and pioneer ways were done.

The difficulties and dangers of this journey were vividly illustrated in the adventures of Professor N. S. Shaler, of Harvard, and two student companions, Quimby and Bean, who visited the Bay this winter in the course of a geological reconnaissance of the Florida coast. Their Key West boatman refused to go farther north than Miami, and they arranged with me to take them to Lake Worth or Jupiter in *Kingfish*. Next morning, however, the weather was such that I, too, refused to attempt the inlets, much to the disgust of the impatient party.

They then insisted that I land them at Baker's Haul-over (where the new inlet has now been opened to the head of the Bay), planning to walk the beach to Lake Worth, and directing me to ship their baggage to St. Augustine via Key West. I explained the difficulties ahead of them, but to unbelieving ears; Shaler had walked across the continent, and the young men were athletes, besides which, as they afterward admitted, they attributed my objections to ulterior motives. So off they went, and we sailed back to the Grove.

During the night the weather conditions greatly improved, so at daylight, with their baggage still on board, Alf Peacock and I started after them outside, knowing fairly well that by this time they would be heartily glad to see us again. Thinking it unlikely that they had gone beyond No. 3 House of Refuge, we went into New River Inlet and up to the landing place, whence a winding trail led through the scrub forest across to the House on the beach.



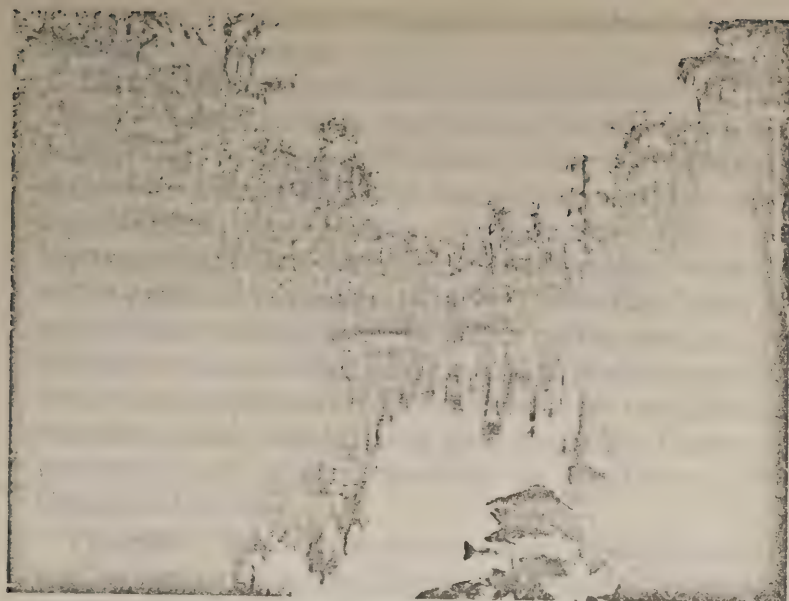
About halfway over we met Shaler — a unique meeting with that charming gentleman! His tall gaunt figure was clad only in an undershirt, his hair and beard stood out in all directions, and his whole aspect spoke fatigue, peril, privation and struggle. With a finger on his lip he said, "Don't say a word, Munroe, I acknowledge the corn! Where is our baggage?" "Here." "Thank God!" said the professor. "Where are the others?" I asked. "In bed at the House," and gradually the story came out.

They had walked the nine miles to New River Inlet and were about exhausted, when Coman, the keeper, who happened to be fishing, saw them and took them the four miles up the Sound to the House in his boat. After a rest and supper they prevailed on Coman, much against his judgment, to launch his sailing dory and try to get them to Lake Worth Inlet.

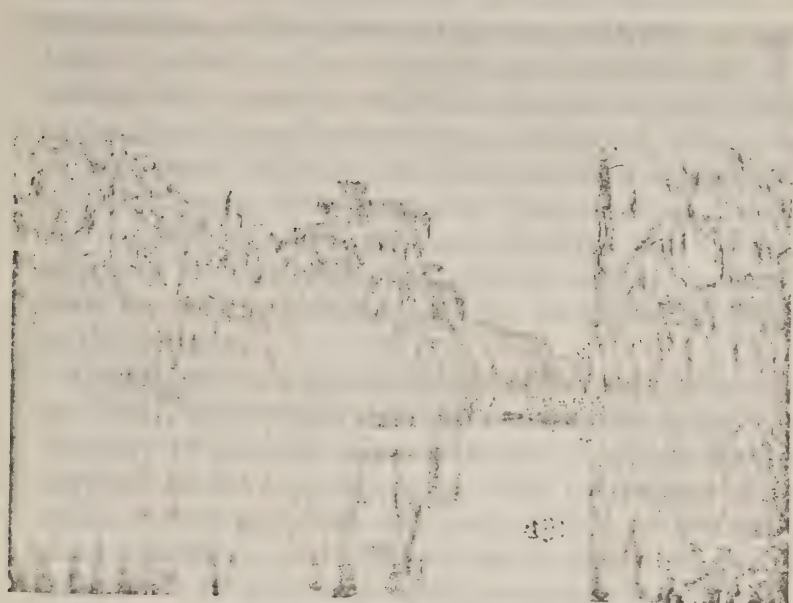
All went well, in spite of the darkness and rough sea, until they reached Hillsboro Bar, where they tried to pass too close, and a breaker rolled the dory over. The ebb tide just about balanced the strong east wind, and kept them right in the breakers. Coman knew that the bar must be alive with sharks, as usual, but said nothing, and the others did not suspect; but the sharks were after all the least of their dangers. The sea kept rolling the boat over and over, breaking the men's grip on it, and had it not been that Coman was a powerful swimmer, and repeatedly got them alongside again, with encouraging talk, it would have been all over with them in the first half-hour. They got rid of their clothes early in the fight, and of course their instruments, guns, notebooks and other belongings followed. Eventually, about an hour after the capsizing, the boat drifted out of the inlet tide into an inshore current and they got onto the beach, crawled up into the grass and tried to sleep.

After daylight, being slightly refreshed, they managed to haul the dory up a bit, and tramped the nine miles back to the station, where they had been but a short





CYPRESSES, NEW RIVER



SPANISH MOSS, NEW RIVER





time when Shaler saw the *Kingfish's* masts down the Sound and came to meet us.

They afterward got word to Steve Andrews at No. 2 Orange Grove Station, and waiting for a smooth time, boated their baggage to Hillsboro Inlet, where Steve met them with an ox-team and carried them all the way to Lake Worth, about a week after their start. With a little less impatience and more trust in what they were told, as the professor remarked to me in Cambridge later, they would have reached the lake intact on the evening of the day after their troubles, but I would probably never have begun a most pleasurable intercourse with this gifted and charming man, which lasted until his death. Coman was rewarded with a good position on the United States Geological Survey.

Professor Shaler was a man of many interests, and during his short visit to the Grove I had called his attention to many possibilities of the region which at once enlisted his interest and coöperation. Among these were the preservation of the green turtle and crawfish, or spiny lobster, as well as that of the sponge, through study of its biology with a view to artificial propagation; also a study of the Spanish mackerel and cero, or kingfish, with a view to a canning industry. All these involved considerable scientific study, and seemed to Professor Shaler within the province of what was then called the Fish Commission, and he readily agreed to use his influence with that body toward the establishment of a biological laboratory in this vicinity.

Green turtle are famous as one of the most delicious of sea foods, and though they were at no time in sufficient quantity to become common in the Northern markets, they might have continued to tickle the palates of epicures, furnish sustenance to many others within nearer reach, and be a source of profit to the fishermen and the state, if they had been properly encouraged in time.

Shortly before the beginning of my story these turtles



were so abundant as to bring but a cent or two a pound in the shell. Off Coconut Grove was one of their great feeding places, and the mysterious deep white holes there are of their making. Porter, and afterwards the Pents, could take their pick, and even when we boarded at the Bay View Villa, we had to stipulate that Peacock should not give us turtle more than twice a week; delicious as his soups were, too much of a good thing might pall. Now, alas, it is many years since we have tasted steak or soup — though experts occasionally find a few small ones.

Their conservation at the time I raised the question was easy. The outer beaches were prolific in eggs at the laying season, but most of them before hatching became the food of bears, 'coons or men. The few that succeeded in getting out of the shell, and down the beach into the water, met a ravenous horde of sharks and barracuda to which they were a delicious and entirely helpless tidbit. There were several hundred eggs in a nest, and an estimate that two per cent of these reached the age of self-protection would be liberal.

The remedy was so simple as to be ridiculous. A few men and boys during the laying months could easily have gotten a great many thousand eggs. To hatch these in safe enclosures of sand was child's play, as pioneer children can testify. With but a trifle of work and a few hundred dollars' worth of wire fencing the little bights on the inside of many keys could have been fenced in, and the baby turtles turned loose to care for themselves, these being natural feeding places for them. This information was all incorporated in a bulletin of my writing issued by the United States Government in 1898 and entitled "The Green Turtle and the Possibilities of its Protection and Consequent Increase on the Florida Coast."

But no — Senator So-and-so's trout stream must first be stocked and the political fences kept up. After a lapse of many years, however, the present Bureau of Fisheries decided to do something and orders were given to secure





eggs and start hatching. None were to be had on the Florida coast, Cuba was tried with little better success, and the effort died. In 1904 I got a batch of 500 eggs from Adams, a Key West turtle-fisher, but none of them hatched out, and I afterward found that they had been taken from a slaughtered turtle. And so the delicious green turtle is "one with Nineveh and Tyre."

Today the mackerel and kingfish are so depleted that they have almost ceased to be an issue with the professional fishermen. Of the sponge industry and its troubles I shall have more to say later. The luscious crawfish, however, is now in a critical stage of its career. Largely gone from its more accessible haunts, it has been preserved so far on the Reef, mainly because it has always refused to enter any such trap as is used for catching its Northern cousins. Economic pressure and growing demand, however, have developed more intensive and successful methods of catching them, and though a closed season has been put on them, in the open months uncountable thousands are shipped to market, and they are rapidly disappearing. It is possible, too, that they have suffered from being cut off from their long-accustomed spawning grounds, on the flats inside the keys, by the embankment of the Key West railroad, which has closed most of the inlets between the keys; this not only bars the passage of the fish, but makes a radical change in the circulation and contents (both chemical and organic) of the water in the lagoons. A prompt and careful study of their life and needs, with immediate adequate protection in the form of proper regulations for their taking and marketing, would still save this unique delicacy to the future.



## XV

### EGRET AND THE YACHT CLUB, 1886-8

THE difficulties of beach travel being thoroughly realized, and the Weather Bureau having established a telegraph line to Jupiter, it seemed imperative that something in the boat line superior to any of the existing craft for this work should be obtained. So in the summer of 1886, to replace *Kingfish*, I had built at Brown's the 28-foot double-ended sharpie lifeboat, *Egret*, very strongly but lightly constructed. She drew eight inches, and had only fifty to seventy-five bricks, laid under her floor, for ballast. She was fitted with all the appurtenances needed to keep the sea in almost any weather, and if necessary to be put on the beach without harm. That she fulfilled all requirements until the first road was opened the older residents can testify.

Her first rig was a sort of cat-yawl, but on trial I did not like it, and substituted the regular sharpie rig, using sails headed by a short gaff and fitted with several battens across the full width of the sail. This cat-yawl rig was (and is yet, by the way) my only failure in rigging or sail-plan. Down to very recent years she was still in service, though latterly bereft of sails, and driven through inland waters by a motor. In 1926 Captain Kosh, who bought her from me, told me the end of her story. Her last owner built a shanty on her and lived on board, tied up on the Miami bayfront for some years. When the present waterfront improvements were projected, involving the great "fill" which produced the City Park, she was not considered worth moving, and was abandoned where she lay. The big suction dredges gently buried her, and there, beneath the pleasure seekers in the breezy park, she lies at peace, after her long life of adventure. *Requiescat!*





"EGRET"



"NEWPORT"





We wonder, my old associate, Captain Dick Carney, and I, if *Egret* in her motor-driven years, didn't often think of the night in the Gulf Stream off Hillsboro when the wind suddenly hauled from northwest to northeast and came on a gale. The two boats with us turned on their heels and ran back for the Cape; should we follow? No! we were bound for Lake Worth. So we tucked in a reef or two and stood offshore. Harder and harder it came down on us, but the little boat never whimpered. The sea? Well, just the Stream in a northeaster, as any skipper can describe it — capping, and phosphorescent in the darkness, with little foot to it.

There were hours of this, offshore and on, trying to locate landmarks against the western sky line. We picked up the first glint of Jupiter's flash, and then its full glare, showing our sure gain to windward. Then we hunted for the treeless beach of the old Lake Worth Inlet, a mile or two below the present one, making short tacks just clear of the surf. Dick at last identified it with his unusually keen sight, and then, stooping head to gunwale, strained his eyes for the gleam of the breakers on Lake Worth Rocks at the inlet. Finally it appeared, and when well to windward and sure of the channel, it was down mainsail and up stick, and with one wild rush we were through the breakers and foam, over the bar, and inside the "point of beach." Say, you motor-boaters, did you ever have any fun of that sort?

It happened that young Will McCormick of Palm Beach (the *Poinciana* was afterward built on his father's grounds, where the house still stands, in front of the hotel) was spending that night at the inlet, fishing, and had his lines out in the cut when we swooped past him out of the roaring turmoil on the bar. No one ever dreamed of running Lake Worth Inlet either at night or in a gale, there being only a foot or so on the bar at low water, and no room to swing inside. The apparition of *Egret*, under these conditions, sweeping past him and rounding to



under the sand-spit, scared him half to death, and for a moment convinced him that there really were ghosts!<sup>1</sup>

On this visit *Egret* was called on to demonstrate sharpie possibilities to some of the Lake Worth folk in a lively afternoon. All were interested in any new type of sailboat (the reader must remember that all traffic on the Lake was then by sail, even the mail and the butcher going from house to house in catboats) and a party including "Doc" Breilsford and Mr. Stone Smith was invited to go sailing. The wind was mild southwest, with signs of a norther coming, and away we went up the Lake putting *Egret* through all the sharpie tricks, some of which are rather startling to those unfamiliar with that handy rig. Meanwhile a heavy squall was rising in the north, and all the scattered sailboats on the Lake made for their moorings in a hurry, while the party on *Egret* grew more and more uneasy, and made several suggestions as to turning back. I wanted to show off the boat, however, and paid no attention, further than to serve out oilers all round, maintaining an air of entire unconcern while the clouds rapidly rose and a white squall swept down the Lake on the first burst of the norther, and the party fumed and scanned the deserted waters. The squall struck like the blow of a club, the little boat was carefully jockeyed through the first puff, and then squared away before the wind, for Dimmick's. She would run under whole sail in anything, and swooped down the Lake like an arrow from the bow, finally running down on the wharf wing and wing, and ending the performance with a sensational jibe and round-up possible only to her light and nimble type and rig, which turns and stops like a polo pony. It was all a revelation to her guests, and led to much talk, and in Mr. Smith's case to the building of the sharpie *Tosida*.

<sup>1</sup> This trip, in 1890, brought my first contact with the Commodore. We were mightily interested in the *Egret*, and in talk about Biscayne Bay, which led to our first visit there, a little later, and so opened that wonderful world to us all, as well as inaugurating a friendship which is an inestimable joy. V. G.





But to return. Early in the fall of 1886 *Egret* and I arrived at Key West by Mallory boat. On the same ship was the Mr. Lum who had sailed to the Bay so adventurously two years earlier, and started coconut-planting before Field and Osborn. On that trip he had twice accidentally worked off the Reef into the Stream, knowing nothing of navigation or even boat-sailing, and got back by pure luck. He accepted my invitation to accompany me to the Bay, and we had a tedious beat up channel as far as Matecumbe. Then, being very tired of it, I asked him if he was willing to go out into the Stream, both for current and for a better "lay." He agreed, very pluckily in the light of his experience, so we made one leg about twenty miles offshore into the axis of the Stream. This was the little boat's first trial of open sea, and she behaved beautifully. The next tack brought us on the Reef again about Turtle Harbor and we entered the Bay at Ragged Rock, getting home promptly — a fine performance.

A number of relatives and friends had planned to spend this winter at the Grove, and as this influx of folk would have quite swamped the Peacock Inn, something had to be done. The house of the *Three Sisters* wreck was put through a renovation, and a rough-stone fireplace built onto one side, while a clearing was made and a wall-tent set up close by. When all was ready I sailed *Egret* to Newport on Key Largo, where I had chartered the schooner *Newport* as the best available transportation for my party from Key West. On her, with Captain Gay and crew, we had a hard tussle with head winds, and arrived at Key West just in time to meet the steamer. Then, with all hands on board, we had a good trip back to Coconut Grove, picking up *Egret* on the way.

The *Newport*, like the rest of the key planters' vessels, had a small trunk cabin aft, in which possibly four persons could manage to sleep, and a large hold, with hatches amidships, in which mattresses could be placed with fair



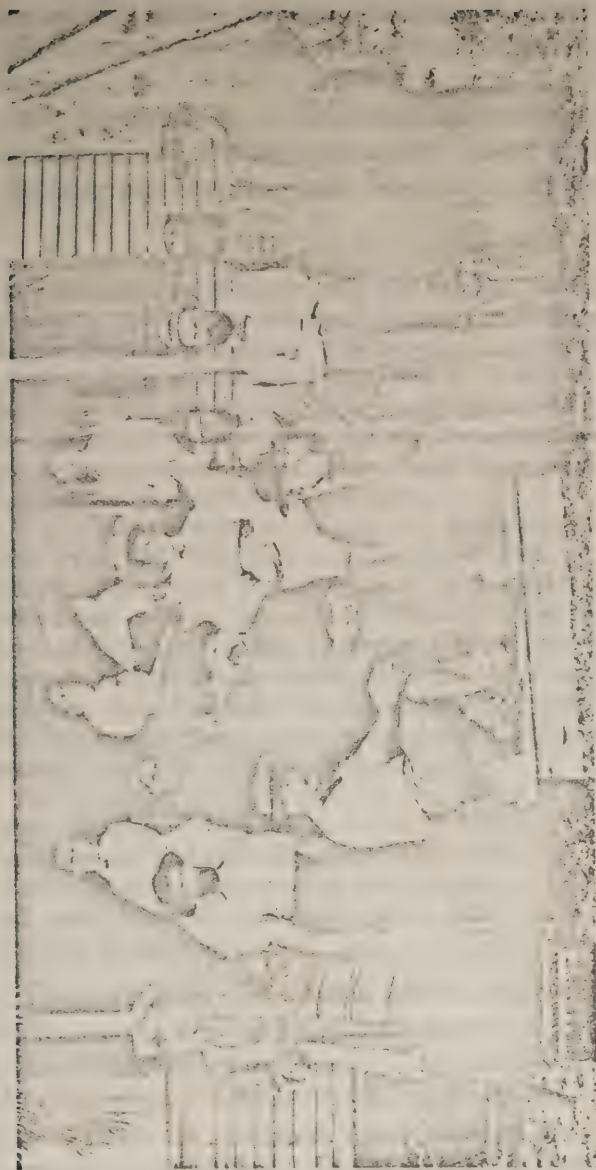
comfort. There were no conveniences of any sort; food was prepared in a small galley on deck, and eaten off the cabin-top. All this is mentioned to show the discomforts which early travelers to the Bay cheerfully made light of — people of as much refinement as those who now come in drawing-room cars, and feel abused if not provided with every luxury.

Our party consisted of my mother, Miss Flora McFarlane, Rev. E. P. Brown, his wife and daughter Theodosia, and Mrs. Abby Goodell Sheppard. The latter was a daughter of Dr. Goodell of Philadelphia and granddaughter of Dr. Goodell of missionary fame. Mrs. Brown was a much esteemed cousin of my father; her father, David Cotting, had been a well-known botanist, and though born and educated in the Eastern states became afterwards prominent in the government of Georgia. The Browns had known the simple life in trying to maintain a church at Oglethorpe's Landing on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, during the Civil War, when they had been reduced to great privation and distress; they therefore made light of their present little trials.

The Hine party soon joined us and established themselves on *Pelican*, and Kirk Munroe and his wife took possession of their new property, the Scrububs. Later came the Rev. Charles E. Stowe, son of Harriet Beecher Stowe, my Uncle Alfred, from Concord, Massachusetts, and my good friend and former teacher, Isaac Holden, nature-lover, member of the Torrey Botanical Club and Secretary of the Wheeler & Wilson Co. of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Other guests at Peacock's were James L. Nugent of France and Count Jean de Hedouville of Belgium. While not the very first winter tourists, this party at the Grove *was* first in point of numbers and interest, and can go on record as such.

At Christmas, with the kindly help of the Peacocks, we had a "community" tree, with presents for all the children of Bay Biscayne, and a dinner for old and young.





FIRST "WINTER VISITORS" ON BISCAYNE BAY, 1886-87

Top: Mrs. Thomas Munroe, Miss Flora McFarlane, Mrs. Kirk Munroe, Edward A. Hine, Mrs. Thomas A. Hine  
 Middle: Doctor Tiger, R. M. Munroe, Mrs. E. P. Brown, Miss Brown, Charles E. Stowe, Thomas A. Hine, James  
 L. Nugent, E. P. Brown

Bottom: Kirk Munroe, Jean d'Hedouville, Alfred Munroe





It was a comprehensive party, scarce a half-dozen of the Bay settlers being absent, and was the first event of its kind to bring joy to the youngsters and fellow feeling to the rest.

Mr. Holden was enthusiastically interested in the new country, and later on told many others about it, as the following extracts from one newspaper report show:

#### A TRIP TO BISCAYNE BAY

No lecture ever given in this city by Mr. Stoddard was more interesting than that delivered before the Bridgeport Scientific Society Tuesday evening by its president, Isaac Holden, Esq. It was a recital of his experiences last winter on a visit to Biscayne Bay, Florida, accompanied by seventy beautiful lantern views picturing the appearance of the country, its tropical vegetation and its varied and peculiar scenery. The audience was large, and frequently applauded the speaker for his ready wit.

A map was shown to make clear the location of the Bay and the coral reefs. Key West and the Everglades were pictured and described. There were beautiful views of live-oaks, air plants, saw palmettoes, coconut palms, and date trees, and many scenes at Coconut Grove, the Miami River, Arch Creek, the Indian Hunting Grounds, and the House of Refuge for the shipwrecked, kept by the matchless Jack Peacock. The various entries in the Washington's Birthday regatta, from a twelve-ton sloop to a Barnegat sneak-box, were pictured and humorously described.

The profusion of views makes it impossible to describe them in detail. They were the work of Ralph M. Munroe, who took most of the negatives, and his companions Alfred Munroe and T. A. Hine. The audience was carried along with the speaker on a trip of pleasure and profit, and the close came all too soon, although Mr. Holden spoke for an hour and a half.

These lantern slides were afterwards supplemented by many more, and were shown over a large part of the United States by a professional lecturer, which was probably the first regular "publicity" given the southeast coast of Florida. So there were boosters for Dade County previous to the Miami Chamber of Commerce and with no real estate speculation in view, either, but just to show folk where life was worth living.



It is instructive now to note the "points of interest" considered worth picturing in 1887. They were almost entirely natural features, the works of man being represented only by a few primitive houses and small sail-boats. The Everglades were still an unexplored wilderness, jealously guarded against white intrusion by the Seminoles, who were keenly mindful of repeated evictions enforced on them by unscrupulous white settlers. The "Hunting Grounds" at Cutler were still the haunt of deer, bear and panther. Indian Creek was a desolate lagoon, haunt of the wild duck and crocodile, a dozen or more of the latter often being visible at once. The Miami River was a mangrove bordered stream, with four or five small buildings on its whole length. There was no Coral Gables, no Miami Beach, no race track, no golf course, not a single orange or grapefruit grove, nor even the suggestion of a truck-farm. There was not a mile of road anywhere, the waters of the Bay being the only highway. There was no "Musa Isle" and no Indian encampment — save that the Seminoles frequently made camp on the grounds of the two Munroe homes at Coconut Grove for a friendly visit. There was not a drop of gasoline in the whole region. Of all the manifold interests of the present-day tourist, only the Reef and a few of the keys remain as they then were. Seldom has forty years made a more sweeping transformation anywhere.

This spring of 1887 it was apparent that the Bay could provide all the boats necessary for a yacht race, and it was decided to celebrate Washington's Birthday with an open regatta. There were fifteen responses to the notices issued, and every boat showed up and made a start, the fleet being divided into three classes. It was a success in every way, the winners being *Ada*, Captain Brickell, *Maggie*, Captain Carney, and *Edna*, Captain Addison, while Alfred Munroe and Charles Peacock were time-keepers and judges. After the race all hands, about fifty in number, participated in a good dinner at Peacock's,





given by the promoters. Thus began organized aquatic sports on the Bay, the Washington's Birthday regatta afterward being a fixture of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, until the displacement of sails by gasoline in general interest caused it to degenerate into a "chowder-party."

The Club had its origin a little later that spring, one day at Peacock's; Kirk Munroe broached the subject, and we at once organized, he electing me commodore, and I doing the same for him as secretary. This friendly arrangement lasted without interruption until 1909, when I declined renomination, my health being poor, and the club having transferred most of its activities to Miami. Kirk continued as secretary until 1922. I designed the club flag, bearing the emblem of a large "N" interlaced with the figures "25" signifying twenty-five degrees north latitude, since we were the most southern club in the country. Mariners abbreviate this to 25 N, but as mariners are not very common among yachtsmen the flag device has almost always had to be explained, and therefore is not entirely a success!

For many years the club membership was limited to fifty, then to one hundred, all active yachtsmen interested in the Bay, and many famous names appeared upon the roster. Headquarters for some time were in the second floor of my boathouse, built in the summer of 1886. By 1901 more room was needed and a comfortable clubhouse was erected on piling in front of the Factory, the site being given the club on condition that they maintain the wharf for general use. When the railroad came and Miami grew, Mr. Flagler<sup>1</sup> was anxious to give the club a fine house in the new city in return for the dignity of its name, age and associations. Many members still felt, however, that it was a Coconut Grove affair, so a com-

<sup>1</sup> Henry M. Flagler, of Standard Oil, whose millions, genius and love of Florida transformed its East Coast, by railroad and hotel-building, from a wilderness to the American winter playground.



promise was effected, whereby the club built a second house at Miami, with Mr. Flagler's help, but retained the old house at the Grove as headquarters. For some time meetings were held in both houses, in alternate months. About 1903 Camp Biscayne was started on the land back of the clubhouse, and when it became advisable to sell this property, in 1925, the club's interests had come to center largely in Miami, and it did not care to move the house. Thus abandoned, it found a stepfather in Bob Erwin, a local contractor, who bought it for one dollar, in April, 1926, slid the 40 x 25 foot, two-story structure bodily onto a barge, and towed it up one of the canals into the outskirts of Coral Gables, where it is now disguised as a residence.

So passed the winter of 1886-7 — the first in which a distinctively "winter colony" was an important element in the affairs of the Bay. Every member of this group became permanently interested in the region, and a number of them are now "prominent residents." From this time on, progressively, the development of winter homes and tourists' interests became the great work of the region. Steam communication was soon brought a step nearer by the excellent service of the Indian River Steamboat Company from the railroad at Titusville, which was extended to Lake Worth points by the narrow-gauge line from Jupiter to Juno and the small steamer *Lake Worth*. Palm Beach, with the Coconut Grove House, built by "Cap" (E. N.) Dimmick, soon outstripped the other Lake resorts and became the winter headquarters of a growing company of enthusiasts.

Travel to the Bay, however, was not affected, and the sixty miles of coast to Lake Worth remained as primitively desolate as ever until the railroad came through in 1896.

The summer of 1887 was quiet. In the fall the Hines and I went down as usual by Key West, accompanied by my friend George B. Davis, fitted out *Pelican* and *Egret* and the winter passed with few events worthy of record.





FIRST CHRISTMAS PARTY, 1886

This small group at Peacock Inn included every resident of Biscayne Bay



FIRST REGATTA OF BISCAYNE BAY YACHT CLUB  
WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, 1887





On February 18 the Yacht Club held a meeting for formal organization, those present being Messrs. T. A. and E. A. Hine, J. W. Ewan, F. S. Morse, J. Herbert Ledwith, John H. Shinn, William B. Brickell, Charles Brickell, Charles Peacock, Jean de Hedouville, James L. Nugent, Harlan Trapp, Kirk Munroe, and R. M. Munroe. Officers elected were R. M. Munroe, Commodore, E. A. Hine, Vice-Commodore, Kirk Munroe, Secretary, and Jean de Hedouville, Treasurer. Later meetings of the same year elected the following additional members: Daniel O'Neill, William Fuzzard and Richard Carney.

The Washington's Birthday regatta of this year brought out seventeen starters and was another success.



## XVI

### RESIDENCE AT COCONUT GROVE, FALL OF 1888

IN THE summer of 1888 it became necessary for me to decide whether I should cast my lot permanently in South Florida, with its uncertainties, or still retain my Northern interests for a time. I was not long in thinking this out, and began preparations for pulling up all stakes. In the fall my mother went to New Brunswick, and "Breczy Knoll," Great Kills, which had been my home for so many pleasant years and some sad ones, was home no longer.

Dick Carney<sup>1</sup> was now sharing my adventures afloat, and had come north with me. Early in the summer, in response to an invitation from Professor Shaler to visit him at Martha's Vineyard, we sailed eastward in *Presto* and had a pleasant trip. We were to prosecute the Biscayne Biological Station scheme with Marshall McDonald, chief of the Fish Commission, then at his summer station at Wood's Hole, Massachusetts.

This we did, thrashing out the various subjects connected with South Florida, which were within his province. As a result, much was promised, but nothing done, Mr. McDonald being unfortunately first of all a politician. Many of those in the bureau under him were highly educated and disinterested men, who unquestionably would have carried out some of my suggestions, but the superintendent had the decision, and Biscayne Bay had no political power whatever. Many years later the authorities turned to some of the problems, in most cases too late for effective action.

On our return to New York *Presto* got another feather

<sup>1</sup> See p. 183.





in her cap. As we passed down New York harbor the weather looked very threatening, and outside of the Narrows we ran into a heavy southeast gale. Off Elmtree Beacon the wind and sea increased; with darkness coming on we thought it wise to run back for a harbor, and anchored off Bergen Point. In company with us had been one of the old oyster-sloops, very able boats which went about their business without regard to weather. This was a big one, but just about the time we turned back she was driven high on the beach, and there she lay next morning when we proceeded homeward.

I remember that night off Bergen Point especially for an example of Dick Carney's quickness and resourcefulness. We were tired, cold and hungry, and immediately on getting the anchor down I sent Dick below to hunt for whatever cold food was available, while I snugged things up on deck. I made a hasty job of it, and hurried after to help, only to be greeted by most celestial odors, and found a full hot meal steaming on the table! Never was a more welcome surprise, and I don't know to this day how he did it.

The Hines had decided on a larger boat for Florida, so together we designed *Nethla*, a 54-foot ketch, and had her built by the Browns. It was a busy summer at the Tottenville yard, where three other boats were building, from my designs, for members of the new yacht club. There were *Holgazana*, 30-foot ketch for Walter Browne, *Allapatta*, 35-foot sharpie-ketch for Kirk Munroe, and *Nickelli*, 33-foot sharpie for Jean de Hedouville.

*Presto* and *Nethla* had roused much discussion about "round-bottomed sharpies" and the United States Coast Survey became interested. Finally Uncle Cris Brown and I both cut round-bilged models, the Coast Survey selected his, planned two such craft for Southern work — *Transit* and *Spy* — and had them built at Brown's yard.

Early in November I left for Florida on *Presto*, with a young friend, Fred A. Molitor, and Dick Carney on



board, and *Nethla* in company, manned by the Hines and several friends. Fred had already shared some of my adventures afloat, and one incident comes back to me as an amusing contrast to his present dignities as a noted railroad engineer and consultant, high in the confidence of the government from his leading work in the World War, and his handling of the longshoremen's strike in New York in 1920. His noteworthy career included many interesting items of railroad development and reorganization all over the world. He had an inordinate appetite for pie, and one summer, shortly after his graduation from Cornell, we ran down the Sound together, sadly lacking in that delicacy. New Bedford gave him a chance to make this good, and he did so thoroughly, returning to the old whaling wharf where we had landed with a large bundle containing a dozen or more assorted pies. He carried it with great care, and made joyful comments on the treats in store; at last, for once, he was going to have enough pie on a cruise!

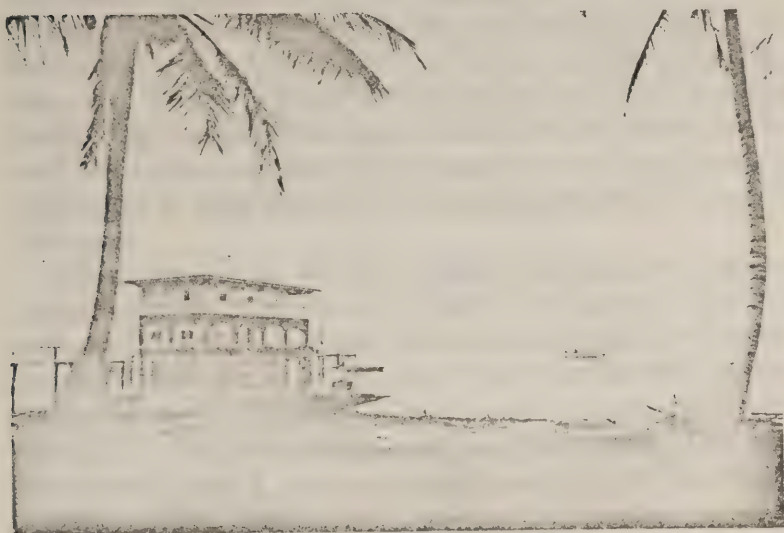
The wharf was very dark and much encumbered with old whaling gear, and as I was feeling my way through this in the endeavor to locate the dinghy I heard a stumble and a splash behind me. Turning hastily, I found that Fred had fallen into a try-pot — a huge iron kettle holding several barrels — which was half full of scummy rain water and the rancid remnants of whale-oil. Alas for the pies, which were catapulted into the heart of this unsavory mess! And alas for Fred, who at least partially followed them!

There were confused sounds of struggle and perturbation, and then Fred emerged, wet, plastered with foul black grease, and clutching in despairing hands the ragged remnants of his precious pies! There was an ominous moment of black silence, and then there arose on the quiet air of that old New Bedford wharf the choicest and most eloquent selection of plain and fancy profanity that any student of English could be expected to accumulate





THE "25-N" FLAG FIRST HOISTED, 1887



BISCAYNE BAY YACHT CLUB, 1901





during the four years at college. It was a treat — no less!

Another incident of this trip comes back to me — a strenuous day on Fire Island Beach at the wreck of the *Gulf of St. Vincent*. It was a hot July day, still and foggy, when we heard of a steamer ashore to the eastward, and sailed up Great South Bay, as we thought, nearly opposite her. Then crossing to the beach, we started bravely out on our supposedly short walk, through the soft sand and muggy heat, and covered several weary miles without any further knowledge of the wreck. Then we overtook the "summer crew" of the life-saving station — two or three men — struggling along with the life-line mortar and apparatus. They had been unable to get a proper crew, and we were immediately pressed into service, being only too willing to take hold. But it was three miles more to the wreck, and the gun had to be dragged through the loose dry sand, the tide being high and the surf heavy. When we reached the wreck we were entirely ready to lie down and die — but had to rig the gun, set up the cable, etc., etc. Then we *really* had enough, and were starting back, but Captain Yarrington would not let us go, as the surf was increasing, and the bystanders were too ignorant of the job to help in case it became necessary to take off the crew.

About three P. M. we were finally released; we limped and staggered back through that seven miles of devilish soft sand, fell on board the boat and collapsed for several hours. At last we woke up, had a little coffee and turned in for the night. The *Gulf of St. Vincent* was later pulled off all right — but she sure gave us one day's work. This was the second time I was commandeered by the life-saving service at Fire Island.

My next visit to Fire Island was with the Ball Brothers, in 1902. They pumped me dry of yarns, including this one, which was received with a little polite incred-



lity. "Well," said I, "here's the spot, let's go and ask the keeper." We did so, and sure enough he knew the story, remembered the times of Yarrington as keeper and on looking up the old logs, found Molitor and me credited with "24 hours service," for which we had never collected!

Having ample time for the run south on *Presto* and wishing to experience for ourselves the reputed terrors of canal navigation, we decided on the inside route as far as it extended, which was to Beaufort, North Carolina. Equipped with a full quota of fenders, lines — and misgivings, we entered the Delaware and Raritan Canal at New Brunswick. Progress was a bit slow and not always southerly, and we indulged in the traditional altercations with mule drivers, bridge tenders and skippers of barges as to our various rights, imaginary or otherwise, but our final conclusion was that life on the "raging canal" is quiet and peaceful compared to salt water experiences. With everything good to eat right at hand, and comfortable rest at night, gliding along through beautiful scenery in the crisp autumnal weather, what more could be wished?

There were several occasions on this run down the Chesapeake when *Presto* outsailed *Nethla* by virtue of her big topsail, a very efficient sail of my design. It is interesting in these days of universal auxiliary power in cruising yachts, when a rather moderate rig, entirely without light sails, has become general, to look back on the importance which the topsails once had. In very light winds the higher canvas had better breeze than the lower, and when the power went out of the wind, and we settled down to drifting, instead of cranking up the engine as we now would, *Presto's* topsail gave her several miles additional distance during the day.

This irked *Nethla's* owner rather badly; his first inquiry at Norfolk was for a sail-maker and his short stay there was spent in the loft, eagerly urging on the construction of





a club topsail for her, while a near-by spar-maker hurried out the necessary sticks. Thereafter the two were on even terms as to relative sail area.

We entered Albemarle Sound on November 20 with a fresh north wind which developed in an hour or so into a gale, and we staggered along through it with shortened sail and flying spray. *Nethla* hauled more by the wind toward Nag's Head, her crew being interested in the remarkable drifting sand-dunes thereabout, while we held our course and anchored under the lee of upper Roanoke Island about noon, hoping that *Nethla* would rejoin us. At dark it was a whole gale, and we spent the night there.

Next day, the wind still increasing, we thought it good judgment to hunt a better harbor, so under close reefs we reached down to a cove on the southwest end of the same island, and again anchored. The third day we expected it to blow itself out, but there was no let-up, and to cut a long story short, we spent six days hanging on under a weather shore with two anchors ahead, and a wind varying from a hard gale to hurricane force, occasionally hauling a couple of points and then backing. We got the third anchor ready, but were not obliged to use it.

The storm seemed inexplicable, and not until we obtained a weather-map, some time afterward, were we enlightened. A tropical cyclone had come up the coast in about the usual course of such storms, but after reaching the Capes of Virginia had doubled on its track, gone southward to Hatteras, then turned once more, resumed its normal course and disappeared up in the northeast. No wonder it puzzled us, and many others.

During this spell of weather we managed, with much difficulty, to land several times, and rambled over quite a little of this historic old island. I believe there is nothing left to show its occupancy by the first colony to the Virginias, whose sad story is still clouded in mystery. It will be remembered that they were established by Raleigh and left to hold the ground while he returned to



England for more men and supplies. On his return there was no trace of the colony save the notice, carved on the bark of a tree: "GONE TO CROATAN." None were ever found, nor was Croatan located, but there have been several fugitive reports of a mysterious white strain among local tribes of Indians. A few earthworks remain to remind the visitor of the Civil War. The scattered inhabitants were interesting and of a distinctly better type than the mainlanders, and we voted them A1.

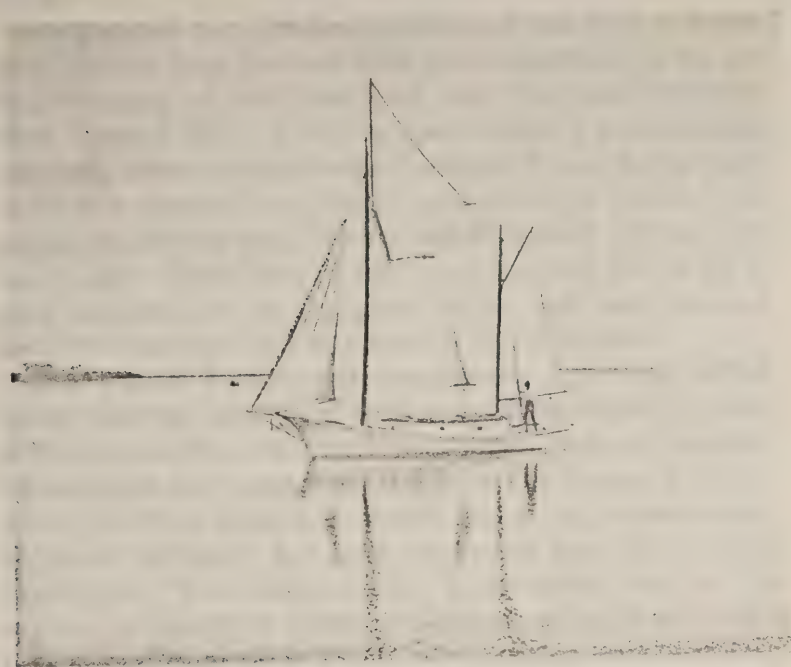
At last the wind moderated, and backing west of north, enabled us to get under way again, but it proceeded to back all the way down to southwest, so nearly all the next day was spent tacking down the west side of Pamlico. Just before sunset, seeing signs of a town a short distance up a creek, we ran inshore and anchored. It turned out to be Middleton — just a few houses and a store. Far as we evidently were from any line of travel, the storekeeper, who was also postmaster, greeted us in good New York language. Having inherited property here it seems he had the sense to go north for an education before isolating himself on his holdings. He was still optimistic but very lonely as he was in a rich but malarial section, over fifty miles from a railroad, and the only other means of travel was an intermittent sailboat service to Norfolk, much farther away. He besought our company for the evening, but recollections of Dick's parting promise of duck stew for supper lured us back to *Presto*, after promises to call again and to send others to take advantage of the low prices by which he bid for trade.

Next day moderate breezes took us to the entrance of Core Sound, and in the evening we landed on Harbor Island and had a gam at the Gunning Club. The keeper reported the storm as most severe, nearly submerging the island and washing away everything except the house. The Beaufort mail and supply boat had not yet reached him, and being from Islip, Long Island, and eager for home news, he was glad to see us. Never before or since





"EGRET" AND "NETHLA"



"ALLAPATTA"

With *Presto* topsail, showing the accepted way to get home in a calm in 1890.  
Dinner Key to left





have I seen such quantities of wild fowl; they had been starved during the week of the storm and were making up for lost time.

A Savannah Line steamer was ashore on Core Beach, and her cargo was being lightered to Beaufort; we later profited by her loss in buying delicious Indian River oranges at \$1.50 per box.

Another southbound yacht of which we had heard was *Awixa* of Bayshore, belonging to Commodore T. B. Asten of New York, who was to join her at Key West and spend the winter on the Florida coast. She was a typical skimming dish, of very light draft and very high sloop rig — in fact about the last thing that could be selected for the voyage. She had come from South Bay in charge of her Islip crew, and was reported a week ahead of us at Harbor Island, which meant that she was gaining on us somewhat.

We guessed that she had ridden out the gale at Beaufort, but we later learned that she had gone out on the first morning of the blow and was afterward reported from Topsail Inlet, scudding past under a goosewinged mainsail, after a vain attempt to enter. It was the opinion of all the experts that she would never be heard from again, as Frying-pan Shoals would surely get her the same night. Her Captain had been warned not to go in such weather, but he was paid by the run, and was in a hurry to get back to Long Island by Christmas.

She passed Frying-pan outside the lightship, which meant that she was 25 miles or more offshore during most of the run and the sea must have been something frightful; nevertheless she turned up all right at the Santee River — a fine “ad” for light-draft boats! They had a time entering here, of which her cook afterward gave me a vivid description. The channel took a northerly turn in the middle, so nearly to windward that they could not make it, and had to anchor; there, between two lines of breakers, close-to on either side, they rode out the last three



days of the blow! They must have had enough of the "sound of the surf."

Later at St. Augustine we heard that she was caught in another northeaster and scudded straight to Key West, where they reduced her rig, cutting five feet off her mainmast. Commodore Asten and his party joined her there and came to Biscayne Bay for the winter, where he became interested in *Presto* and *Nethla*. Finally I designed for him *Oriole*, 55-foot ketch, afterwards renamed *Mercedes*, which was built a few years later at Brown's, but never came to Florida.

Core Sound, in spite of its shoal and tortuous channels, gave us no trouble. On the beach and on various well-wooded islands, were little hamlets of well-kept houses, with old-fashioned windmills which were a delight. Here, too, we passed, at some distance, an odd-looking craft which we afterward learned was Captain Joshua Slocum's canoe on its way home from South America with his family; we were sorry not to have had a gam with him. He had lost his ship off the South American coast, and took this native craft for his homeward journey. It was this trip, apparently, which gave him a taste for small-boat travel, and finally resulted in the famous voyage of the *Spray*, single-handed, around the world.

We enjoyed a good Thanksgiving dinner under the lee of one of the villages, and soon after opened up Beaufort. Under Fort Macon lay another ketch which had the general appearance of *Nethla*, and at first we thought ourselves beaten. This turned out to be the *Transit*, however, and catching up to her we anchored off the town together. She had weathered the gale in one of the west Pamlico harbors, but knew nothing of *Spy*, her sister boat of the Coast Survey. The schooner *Ellie*, also southbound, was anchored here with us.

Just before dark another ketch was sighted which really was *Nethla*, and when they anchored there was no time lost in comparing notes of the last ten days. They had





run up in Shallowbag Bay, in the lee of Nag's Head, but could not get close enough to shore to lie in smooth water. The protracted gale drove the water out from under them until they thumped bottom badly between each wave and the next — and there they spent that enjoyable week! Needless to say they were most uncomfortable and apprehensive, but Uncle Cris Brown's sound workmanship averted any serious damage to the boat. *Presto's* crew had had the least discomfort, and took the customary way of rubbing it in, of course, but we agreed not to separate again unless it were unavoidable.

The weather continuing unsettled, we lay quietly at Beaufort eating oranges. *Spy* came in and we were four boats of similar rig, all bound for Florida, and all built at Brown's. The fleet, including the schooner *Ellie*, arranged to sail in company the rest of the way, but the first day after leaving Beaufort the wind came out ahead, and *Nethla* and *Presto* sailed the others out of sight, finally reaching Biscayne Bay weeks ahead.

On arrival at Coconut Grove we found my boathouse finished, all but painting and staining, on which we at once set to work. We arranged the upper floor for living quarters, the ground floor as a workshop, laid a mooring for *Presto*, and began our first real home in Florida. *Nethla* having sprung her centerboard we took it out, straightened and rehung it, this being the first job in the boathouse shop. *Nethla* then sailed for Long Key, where the Hines had now a large coconut grove under way.

My father's youngest brother, Alfred, was now a regular winter visitor, much to our pleasure, and that of everyone he met; he was one of the most lovable of men. Even the Indians regularly inquired as to his coming, and always spoke of him as "Uncle Alfred." A few years previous he had taken up photography as an amusement, and became very successful — rather a rare thing for a person of his advanced age.

Our relations with the Indians at this date are now



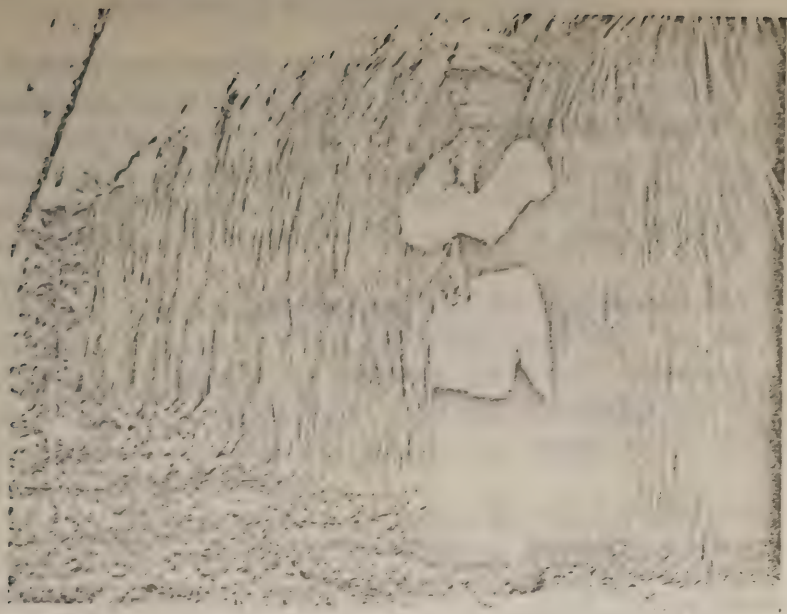
interesting to look back upon. Taught by generations of intermittent conflict, in the course of which our government not infrequently resorted to stratagems quite beyond the pale of the Indians' war code, they thoroughly and permanently distrusted the United States, and would have nothing whatever to do with anything directly connected with Uncle Sam. This went so far that when, later on, they were being crowded off the last habitable Everglade islands by the march of settlement, and were offered a reservation for a permanent home, secure to them, they refused to take it, convinced that the gift of the government must have a treacherous string to it.

Descending from those who had escaped persecution in the inaccessible recesses of the 'Glades, they felt their only safety lay in seclusion, and opposed the visits of white men by every peaceful means. They jealously guarded the secrets of the obscure waterways through the saw-grass, and aided by the fact that the whole 'Glade region was thought of as only a remote and barren swamp, they kept it for their own for many years.

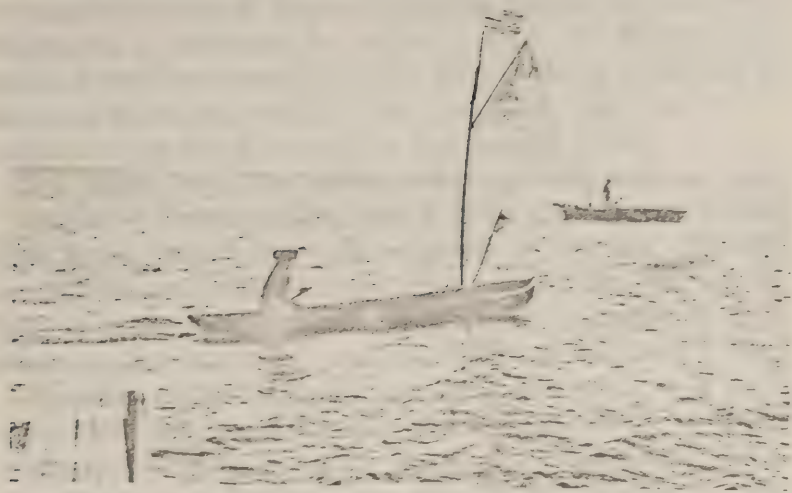
It is tribute to their intelligence and breadth of thought that despite this racial feeling and policy, the relations between individuals of the two races were governed by personal experience and good faith, and were often most cordial. They came regularly to the coast to fish and to trade, and were frequent and welcome visitors to both Munroe homes, traveling in their beautifully modeled cypress dugout canoes, and making camp on the water-front.

Their laws were simple, and rigidly enforced, and covered most of what we consider the basic virtues. Honesty was one of the first items, and included not only respect for property, but strict truth-telling, and the meticulous keeping to the letter of any promise. They were industrious, raising quantities of various crops, and even selling them to the white settlers. They were admirable hunters and fishermen. Their marriage laws were strict, and lack



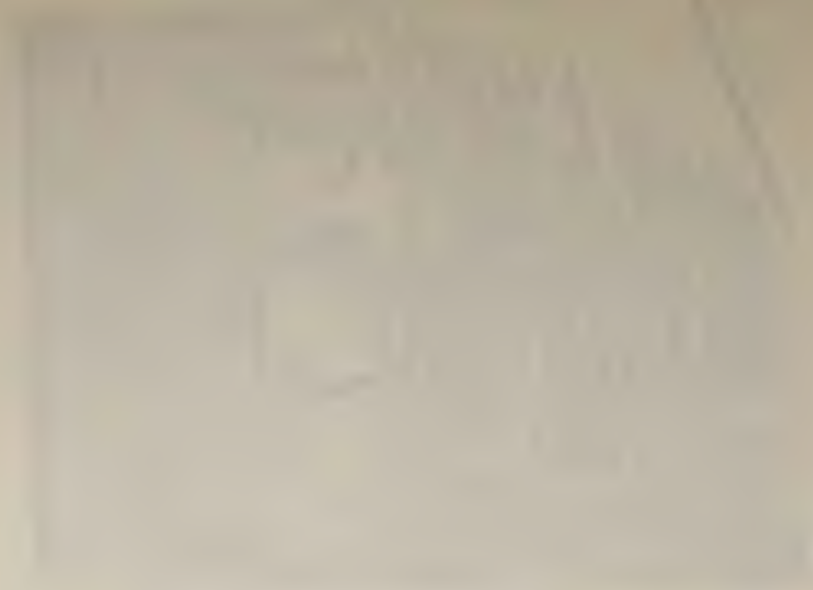


DOCTOR TIGER



SEMINOLE CANOE UNDER SAIL.  
Beautifully modelled from a cypress





of chastity was heavily punished. They have been said to hold slaves, but it seems rather that they offered sanctuary to fugitive blacks, receiving them as protégés and treating them kindly. They were unusually considerate for the weakness of women, children and the aged, and the normal daily life in their villages held a great deal of happiness.

So we learned to admire and like the Seminoles, and welcome their visits. They certainly stood high in the social scale compared to many of the North American tribes, and we can only regret their sad deterioration into idleness and drunkenness which has come with the advance of "civilization."

The local talent of Key West was stirred this year by stories of the new yachts in Biscayne Bay, which they could not persuade themselves were anything but "shoal-draft, light-weather" craft. This went so far that they built the sloop *Moccasin* as a champion of their deeper type, designed by Edward Burgess of international fame. With her came the old New York sloop-yacht *Glance* then in use as a pilot boat on Key West Bar. The Key Westers were quite proud of this craft but she turned out not even the equal of *Moccasin*. In order to show the Bay triflers what a real boat could do, the Key Westers arranged a series of races, as to which their only fear was that there might not be wind enough to test out the boats.

To their joy, the great day opened with a stiff "souther." Tommy Hine and I debated whether *Presto* and *Nethla* should carry club-topsails or not, but decided we did not need them to beat *Moccasin* and that we would have a better race between ourselves if we confined ourselves to "lowers only," and on that basis we started out.

*Moccasin* crossed the line under gaff-topsail, but had more than she could handle, and soon struck it, in spite of the astonishing fact that *Presto* and *Nethla* were both outrunning her badly! Very soon after the start it was evident that *Moccasin* was nowhere, and *Glance* still more



so, the honors of the race lying between the two Bay boats, while for once *Presto*, in spite of being ten feet shorter, had the best of *Nethla*.

I need not tell any yachtsman what this meant to Hine and to Commodore Foote of the Atlantic Yacht Club who was with him. Try as he might it did not seem possible to restore *Nethla* to her usual leading position. It was soon too much for him, and *Nethla's* great club-topsail was run up and sheeted home! Of course *Presto's* had to follow, but even with its aid I could not make her hold her lead over the bigger boat. Each of us had all the sail he could carry and a little bit more, and we fought out the remainder of the race in a wild dash and smother of foam. *Moccasin* and *Glance* were completely forgotten, hopelessly in the rear, while *Nethla* and *Presto* made a desperate fight for the lead. *Nethla* slowly forged ahead and eventually took the race and the cup, which had seemed so assured to *Presto* during the first half of the race.

*Moccasin* came trailing home, severely beaten and quite crest-fallen. The Regatta Dinner followed at the Peacock Inn, during which the Key West contingent was urged to stay on for other races, to be arranged to suit, but they unfortunately had pressing engagements in the Island City which made it necessary for them to sail southward immediately after the conclusion of the feast!

This winter, with Uncle Alfred Munroe in *Presto*, and accompanied by *Nethla*, we took a cruise around to the west coast of Florida. We were not much impressed, and the only incident worth recording was a strong cold norther remarkable for its lateness. The fact is that to the yachtsman nothing can compensate for the lack of the warmth, color and brilliance of the Gulf Stream and the life it brings to the Keys, nor for that of the incomparable trade wind which for so great a part of the year makes the southeast coast an ideal sailing-ground. The beautiful and varied waters of the Bay, the Hawk Channel and the lagoons offer a cruising-ground unequaled elsewhere in





the United States, if anywhere, while the slightly warmer and more equable climate completes the charm.

We had a pleasant visit to Major Evans at Fort Myers on this trip, and he presented me with suckers and shoots of the giant bamboo from his grounds; they grew well on the low ground behind my boathouse, and the resulting clump of bamboo, some sixty feet high, remained prosperous until the gale of 1926, furnishing many a boat-boom and other light strong piece of timber.

Among those who came to the Bay early were several interesting young men who were attracted by the country and its opportunities in general, but more especially by the boats.<sup>1</sup> One of the first of these was Richard Carney, now for many years "Captain Dick" to all of Coconut Grove, and firmly established in the affections of all who know him. A spry young Jerseyman, he first saw Biscayne Bay in the employ of Field and Osborn, in their coconut-planting days. When that work was finished the country and the water life had taken firm hold of him and he was loath to return to inland Jersey. Instead he threw in his lot with me, and for some years we were inseparable. He was sailor, cook and comrade, all in one, and expert in all three rôles. He was as quick as a cat, mentally and physically, and when there was any occasion for haste he got results in incredibly short order.

He and I were one in love of adventure, and willingness to work hard in any new and interesting enterprise. Together we explored and marked the Bay and near-by waters more thoroughly than they had ever been before. (For these stakes, by the way, the hard and semi-worm-proof "whitewood" of the keys was always used; it would stand for some years, while almost any other wood was honeycombed in a few months.) All the "larks" Dick was heartily ready to share, whether fishing up the Scotch ale, recovering the steamer *Alexandria's* cargo, or running Lake Worth Inlet at midnight in a northeaster.

<sup>1</sup> And most certainly by the Commodore! V. G.



His boyish spirits and energy overflowed in many a practical joke, some of which were not entirely relished by the victims. One of these became famous in an unexpected way. In the early days a dance at Coconut Grove attracted almost every family on the Bay, and of course the babies had to come along, being put to sleep in a room devoted to them for the evening. One night in the midst of the festivities Dick slipped off to the "nursery" and finding, as he hoped, the caretaker absorbed in watching the dance, proceeded to exchange most of the infants, putting them not only in each other's places, but in each other's clothes as well. Eventually the mothers danced themselves out, gathered up the slumbering youngsters and sailed away home, where most of them arrived about in time for the next day's work. Daylight brought scenes of consternation and wrath, all over the Bay, that are better imagined than described. Kirk Munroe was there, and told the story to Owen Wister, who soon afterward incorporated it in his novel "The Virginian," thus giving it an international circulation.

About the same time an old gray mule, turned out to graze, was striped, zebra fashion, with shoeblacking, and though he returned faithfully to his stable at night, his owner did not recognize him, and spent the next two days hunting his mule, high and low. A shotgun is said to have figured in this story when the hoax was discovered, but Dick lay low until he was forgiven. Again, finding J. B. Hammond, of typewriter fame, sound asleep on his boat, he quietly lifted her anchor, and towed her a mile or so above Dinner Key, where Mr. Hammond awoke, much mystified. One Sunday, having spent the day in painting his boat, he met the minister on the way home, informed him that one of the residents had desecrated the day by working on his boat, and protested strongly. Later he went to church and enjoyed the preacher's vehement denunciation of this deplorable breach of proper Sabbath observance!





"OLD EMATHLA," SEMINOLE WAR LEADER

Note the strength and keenness of his face, and the nicety of his dress. A fine old man. Bitterly suspicious of white men and all their works, his confidence was completely won by the Commodore, whom he frequently visited, and he was also very fond of Uncle Alfred





When the Barnacle was built, and smaller boats fulfilled my need, Dick took command of various other yachts, finally coming into the employ of Mr. W. L. Mellon of Pittsburgh, whose large and comfortable houseboats, steam and gasoline, all named *Vagabondia*, he has commanded on their long voyages for many years. Recently he spent nearly a year in Kiel, Germany, overseeing the completion of the present *Vagabondia*.

Another enthusiastic youngster was Dan Lund. He was originally picked up by Mr. Haigh "on the beach" at St. Augustine, where he had been wrecked. All sailor, he had somehow drifted to Alaska with the big gold rush, and sated with cold, if not with gold, had traveled east and south in time to encounter some of the great floods of the Missouri; his tales of rescue-work across-country in a motor-boat, and of barbed wire fences as a peril to navigation, were a treat! His opinions and feelings were as vigorous as his sea-toughened body. He commanded several yachts, and made an admirable skipper except during protracted periods in harbor, which did not suit him at all. Eventually he married, and took a half-interest in a boat yard at Miami, which developed an excellent business.

His death was as strange as his life. Having bought a little sloop to knock about in, he proposed to his father-in-law to try her out by a run over to Cat Cay and back. They sailed, as usual, at nightfall, to get the easterly phase of the trade wind during the night, and make their Gun Cay landfall in the last of the darkness, with daylight to follow for the entrance.

All went smoothly until about midnight, when something required Dan's attention on deck forward. It was never clear what happened, for the old gentleman knew nothing whatever of boats, and the pitch-black night entirely hid the scene; but something went wrong — probably an unexpected jibe caused by the inexperienced hand at the wheel. At all events, Dan got a bad crack on



the head, which seemed to half-stun him. He got back to the cockpit, and partly recovered; later he had to go forward again, and though there was no noise or disturbance, this time he never returned. Soon the old man became alarmed, and called, but got no answer; then he managed to scramble forward, and found the deck clear! Dan was gone — and never was seen again.

Utter panic took possession of his companion, and small wonder. The engine was running all this time, and he had some idea of steering, so he attempted to circle back in the hope of hearing Dan call from the water — but anyone who has ever sailed the choppy Stream in a dark night will know how futile such an attempt would be. There was nothing to see save the formless, irregular, tossing seas, rushing out of the void of blackness, with an occasional cap of luminous foam, and nothing to hear but the constant, murmurous, sinister voice of the great waters. For half an hour the hopeless search was continued. Then in despair the boat was headed on what the steersman thought was the back-track to Florida, the faithful engine continued to run, and the little vessel spent the remainder of the night working slowly landward again.

He seems to have steered nearly west, probably by the stars, but did not allow anything for the current of the Stream — perhaps hardly knew of it. At all events, shortly after daylight he sighted the coast, saw an inlet ahead, and steered for it. Running into the breakers at last, several combers came aboard and stopped the engine. By this time, however, the wind had shifted eastward and the sails, still set, were full. They carried him on, into smooth water, where he blindly drove ashore and collapsed in the bottom of the boat, to be picked up and nursed for three days before he could even attempt to tell the story! The current had of course carried him north during the night, and he had chanced on New River Inlet — the first north of the Bay.

That was practically all that ever was known of Dan





Lund's last sail. The dinghy was gone, its painter broken, and many of us thought that perhaps Dan had seized it as it passed him, after falling overboard, and broken it loose, afterward to climb in and be picked up by a passing vessel. For weeks we half expected news of him from some steamer arriving abroad; then for months we scanned the foreign news for sailing ships; and long after that became an obvious impossibility we pictured Dan knocked silly, his memory lost, but still picked up and drifting about the world, not knowing where his home was. So clings the human heart to hope — but it has been in vain. Dan, strong as an ox, the best of sailors, the indomitable boyish lover of adventure, was knocked overboard by the boom, like any landlubber, and drowned, in the middle of the Gulf Stream. I can write him no better epitaph than the note made then on his photograph: "A good friend, and a *man*."

Two other boys, Brainerd and Charley Ball, were brought south primarily for health. They took to the water, commanded yachts, ran party-boats and in general became closely identified with the early water-life of the region. Among other things they homesteaded the Ragged Keys, their lines including the six keys, and a bit off the narrow end of Sand's Key to the south. Early in the development of the great boom an eager speculator's eye fell on this barren tip of Sand's Key, and the Balls were asked to name a price for it. While they were debating whether they should ask two hundred or three hundred for it, the buyer lost patience and demanded, "Well, will you take four thousand for it?" The incident was typical of the breathless absurdity of the early speculation. The islands were eventually sold for prices that for years continued to seem incredible to the pioneers, more especially since the hurricane of 1906 had stripped them of practically all vegetation and made them almost uninhabitable. One of them went to Mr. Sieberling of rubber tire fame, and was extensively improved.

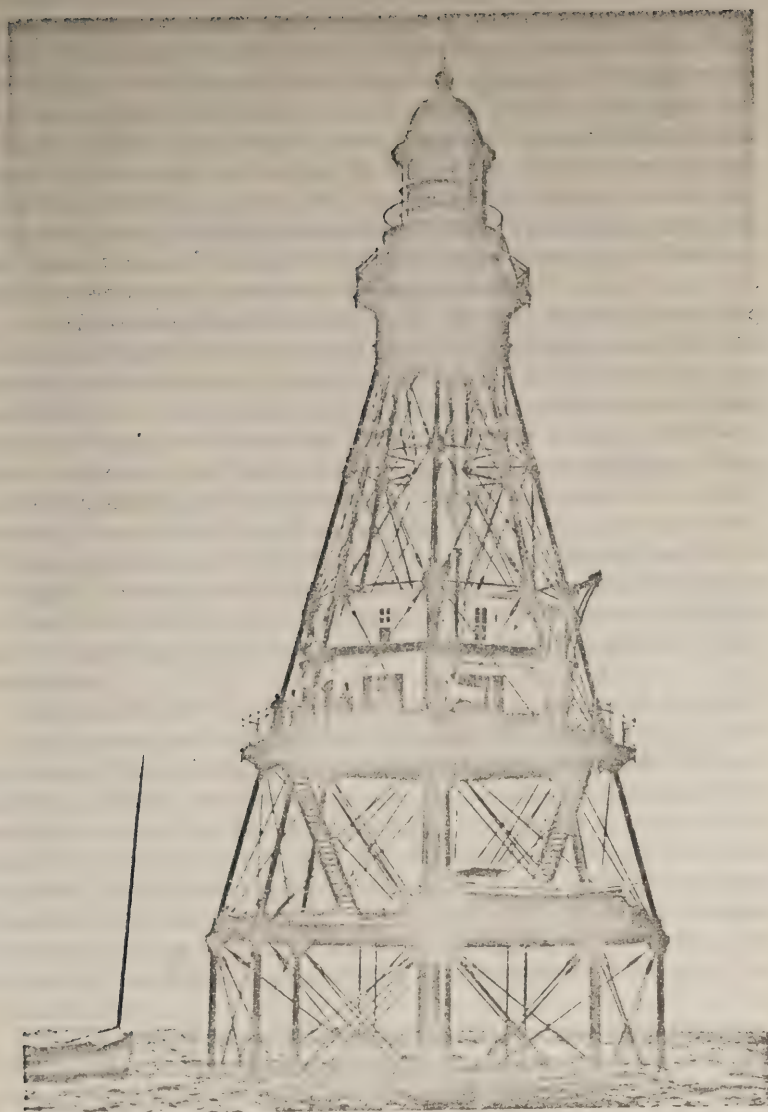


Previous to the present dredged channels, made by Flagler in 1905, in preliminary work for the Key West railroad line, the inside route to Florida Bay was a very dubious and tortuous affair. Jewfish and Steamboat creeks were much as they are today, but their entrances were blocked by weed-grown marl-banks, through which ran narrow, crooked and incomplete channels cut out by occasional wind-tides.

Our exploring spirit was new to the region, previous settlers having had scant time and no inclination for such interests. It early sent *Presto* southward to the Sounds, and our first trip through Cutter Bank was memorable. John Pent declared that all mysteries of the Bank were open to him and offered to take *Presto* through. He sent her into the entrance with superb confidence, wing and wing, but alas! within a few seconds she drove herself half out of water on one of the soft and slippery ooze-banks. Even her rockered form could not be moved with the sails, poles found no bottom in the white mud, and anchors would not hold, so that kedging was impossible. We went through the gamut of effort in such circumstances, on a falling tide, and then settled down to the conclusion that nothing could be done until the next high water. Meanwhile we solemnly convened, in the form of a drum-head court-martial, summoned John before it, and put him on trial for gross incompetence. He was duly condemned, and sentenced to be hanged at the yard-arm unless *Presto* could be floated on the next tide. The proceedings were carried out so seriously that John was pretty well convinced we were in earnest, and was visibly worried until the tide came in, and actually did free the boat!

Later this season *Presto's* surf-riding was put to an interesting test in a life and death race which I described in "Yachting" for December, 1927, in the following article, "An Accomplishment of Sail":





FOWEY ROCK LIGHT





It was early summer and we were having our usual touch of an extra fresh east northeast trade wind, bringing boats down to generous working reefs and kicking up a sea worth noticing along the coast. The weekly mail schooner from Key West to Miami was several days overdue and the settlement had begun to tire of watching the southerly sky-line for the heads of *Dellie's* sails above the horizon. "Guess she's found a wreck" was finally the verdict, and of course there was no use looking for her longer. That business always preceded mailbags, unless the dinghy could manage inside the Keys with them. Suddenly someone sang out "There she is coming in the Cape Channel," and after she had headed toward us, "Told you so! After more men, wreck must be close to Fowey."

As *Dellie* rounded up there was a rush for the dinghies and excited men were aboard before the mail could be handed on deck. A hush ensued for the schooner's captain was telling a far different tale than was expected — one of driving the *Dellie* day and night up the Hawk Channel in order to take the keeper, Captain Larner, off Fowey Rock lighthouse and back to Key West before his wife died. They had reached the light that morning and found it impossible to make a landing — to say nothing of attempting to take the old captain off. This all hands conceded, for they knew well what the reef was like in a "rage." The captain had decided to go up the bay, deliver and take on the Miami mail, get back by dark, and go out to Fowey first thing in the morning, hoping that the weather might moderate in the meantime.

Dick Carney and I, sole crew of *Presto*, went on board, prepared a hasty dinner and decided that we would like to see Fowey Rock in a rage. The mooring was cast off about noon, after the *Dellie* had sailed for Miami. Soon we were at the Cape, making things snug for a washing crossing the bar. A few minutes later, under reefed sails and eased sheets, we were plunging into the first line of breakers and doing well. Breakers were just pie for *Presto*, but without warning, came the familiar sound of a parting rope, a look aft, — and there was our dory just turning a backhanded somersault clear of the water, and scattering her favors of oars, bailer, and sponge as if she were the horn of plenty.

Away went our hopes of bringing Larner back with us that day. Without that dory and oars there was little chance for our well-laid plans. There were the essentials tossing about, visible only at intervals amid many acres of broken water. By the time we could have salvaged even part of that mess it would be getting late, and we had no spare oars. Yet, while all this was passing through my mind, I had instinctively and without further thought of possibly being boarded abeam by the sea, hauled the tiller hard up and before our friend



Jack Robinson's name could have been mentioned, *Presto*, with sheets still flattened, had jibed over and was going down wind in her own wake, easy and moderate as could be wished for. Dick had already spotted the flotsam strung out in line about right. He had the end of the mizzen sheet laid at his feet, also the boat hook and landing net snatched from off the house top. Now if the next sea would only break just right — and it did. We came first to the dory, with bow in right direction but capsized. With a turn of his hand, Dick had a loop in the end of the parted painter and with the other hand he completed the bend; another move and he had a turn with the slack sheet over the quarter bitt. Rendering it handsomely, he had the water-filled boat following like a lamb — and by this time we were up with the oars and other fittings. Now if the sea would only behave again! It did, and Dick had an oar in each hand, the wooden scoop bailer next, and then the sponge, just visible. The landing net did the trick. Dickey turned to me and said "Any more things you want, Skipper? Say the word."

"You take the turns of the painter off the bitt and play that fish by hand until I get *Presto* out of this pickle."

"Aye, aye," said Dick, and I put the tiller slowly to port. Round she came into the wind and onto the port tack, which we had left in starting our quest for flotsam. We hadn't touched a sheet or been boarded by a sea. How did she manage to "stay" so sweetly, with that water-logged boat in tow and so little way on, while still in the breakers, I'm asked? Well, you don't know *Presto* and I haven't time just now to tell you, but I will say that we didn't even haul the mizzen a-weather, which would certainly have hastened matters if we had had any doubts as to her staying.

Another half hour and we were in the Hawk Channel, all clear. Bailing the dory was an easy job after a new piece of line was fast to her. A few slack-ups on the painter and sudden tautening, after she was righted, got most of the water out, and Dick got the rest. About an hour later we were to leeward of Fowey Light, some 75 yards, hove to.

The keepers from their morning experience with *Dellie*, knew what we wanted and sent a new heaving line on a buoy which was easily picked up, and we soon had a heavy line aboard and made fast around our mainmast, which was well parceled. (I say mainmast because she was a ketch.) Then we took in the two forward sails and stopped them, but left the mizzen standing with the boom well guyed to starboard. There were some broken iron rods in the north side of the light, with none too much water over them, and our head line might part and let her head cant the wrong way, but we needn't have worried. The keepers began taking in the slack of this line as





*Presto* surged ahead between the seas. Soon she was entirely within the breakers, her nose pole about 30 feet from the piling, and nothing happened. A good strong man could have held that line after we reached this position. We didn't stop then to find out why, but accepted the situation. Afterwards we reached a solution which seemed sensible. There was a back draft from the superstructure of the light tower as well as from the piling and its braces below. Being so broken up by this more or less open structure, the wind pressure apparently became more equalized than if the obstruction had been monolithic. However, there will be no fuss about this; *Presto* lay behind that tower just as comfortable as could be, pitching at times to some extent, and rolling, but at no time excessively. Of course there was enough sea round the piling to be very dangerous at times, and the spray was flung over the lighthouse platform from the weather side, but so different was it from what it seemed at a distance that Dick and I really felt sort of foolish. Still, every precaution had to be taken that no one would get hurt or the boat damaged.

By my standing in *Presto's* cockpit, and Captain Larner getting down close to the center of the lower platform, each could hear very well what was said above the roar of the wind and breakers, and there we arranged further action, which was successfully carried out. The new heaving line was made fast to the bow of the dory, her long painter carried to *Presto's* main port shrouds with its slack in the cockpit beside me. Two of the keepers tended the dory bow line and kept an eye on the whole situation. Captain Larner stood on the rungs of the iron ladder as far down as the sea would let him. Dick slipped off his coat and shoes and sat facing the bow in the bottom of the dory with a pair of oars handy. All set, we waited for a smooth. It seemed ages, but it came; I gave the word by hand and mouth, as I could see below the platform. The dory was quickly hauled alongside the ladder, Larner jumped, landing fair, and went down into the bottom. Dick steadied her as the two keepers slacked her back. Abreast of *Presto* I hauled her nearly alongside with the painter. Another wait for a smooth and a port roll of *Presto*. It, also, came just right and the boats were together. I reached over and grabbed an arm and a collar, while Dick parbuckled his other end and jumped aboard at the same time, cut the heaving line, passed the painter astern and let go our head line.

"Not a bruise or a chafe. How's that, Skipper?" asked Dick. Nowadays I might have said "Fine and dandy," but I just shook hands with him. Sail on her again, we waved our hats to Fowey and with a quartering wind were "a-biling" along on our way to the Grove. As we again crossed the sand bores Dickey shook his fist at them.



"Don't," said I, "they treated us decent, didn't they?"

"Yes, but that was *Presto*."

*Dellie* was waiting, anchor short. They had surmised what we were up to, and could see from away off that we had Larner aboard. Before sundown they were well on their way towards Key West and that stricken wife, 18 hours sooner than if *Presto* had not been able and willing. It is pleasant to record that he found her convalescent. We were afterwards told that Captain Wright, of the Lighthouse supply steamer *Fern*, had landed case oil at Fowey by means of a sling and moorings and by using a power launch, in weather as bad, if not worse, but no effort to transfer men had been made.

One of the most exciting wrecks on the southeast coast occurred about this time. It was not actually seen by anyone, but kept everybody from the Keys to Jupiter eagerly interested for some time. A bark bound from Bordeaux to Havana, loaded chiefly with assorted wines, broke up in the Gulf Stream somewhere off Havana in a hurricane, and for weeks thereafter the beaches were strewn with pipes, casks, kegs and barrels. The entire population of the southeast coast declared whole-holiday and moved to the shore en masse, and oh! what a time everybody had! For many months there was scarcely any solid food consumed, and no traffic on the Bay save rafts of casks.

Jolly Jack Peacock was an especially successful collector, so much so that there seemed no possibility of drinking the entire stock; he finally took the heads out of some of the casks, and *bathed* in the wine, thinking it would help his rheumatism! Sam Rhoads of Sam's Bight assembled a large raft in Bear's Cut, and in attempting to bring it home in a fresh northeaster, was blown down to the Cedars in the lower bay, refusing to be taken off. Eventually most of it was lost, but he got a little back. Even the Indians flocked out from the Everglades, and in some cases sawed casks in two, losing half the contents, and then balanced the resulting tub between two canoes and boated it up the river.

There was a great quantity of claret in this cargo, as



well as many kegs of an inferior so called "Madeira," also much "lady's wine" — an unnamed sweet port. Unheeded on the beaches was also a considerable quantity of mustard and candles. Most of the casks were vented to allow for fermentation, and all these suffered more or less dilution by salt water, some being completely ruined. The madeira was not so treated, and many of us tried to save some of it, thinking it might age into good quality. Within a few weeks, however, the kegs commenced to leak, mysteriously, and having no means of bottling it, we lost it all. It seemed that a peculiar small worm had bored the casks.

The same conditions prevailed all along the coast to Lake Worth and beyond, and throughout the region similar tales are still current of the notable "wine wreck."





## XVII

### SPONGE CULTURE, 1889

THE summer of 1889 was spent in prospecting various possible industries for the Bay. My attention had been called to the possibilities of sponge culture by Mr. Jeremiah Fogarty of Key West, a gentleman of long experience as buyer and packer, who had grown a few samples from cuttings. Biscayne Bay was admirably adapted to planting — more so than any other point on the coast; it had a greater variety of bottom, from the oozy marl of the lagoons to the rock of the outer reef, water of all degrees of density, from the Gulf Stream to fresh, and current of any desired velocity. I decided to try planting, and having a good vessel in *Presto*, together with sponge-hooks, water-glasses and boats, I had only to select suitable supports for the cuttings.

After some experiment I fixed on whitewood saplings, which were plentiful, fairly worm-proof, and heavy enough to hold their place in a current. They were cut in 12-foot lengths, with a cross piece at one end to prevent rolling over. The cuttings were attached in various ways — wedged into holes with pegs, wired around the pole, etc. — but the quickest was short pieces of brass wire doubled and driven lengthwise into the grain of the wood with a peculiar grooved punch. I experimented also with bamboo stakes and double lines of twisted brass wire connected by wooden cross-pieces, the cuttings being inserted between the strands; also flat pieces of coral rock, with drilled holes and wooden wedges. We tried galvanized iron, but it was useless, corroding very quickly, especially wire; in fact we lost most of the first plantings through it. The brass wire also gave some evidence of being injurious, though some of the best results at this



time were obtained with it. Twelve years later, Dr. F. H. Moore of the Bureau of Fisheries devised a small concrete disc, supporting six inches of lead-covered wire, which gave excellent results, but was too expensive to be profitable.

Having prepared the supports we hooked up enough sponge for several days' work, placed them in nets hung from the side of the schooner, selected our ground and got to work. A few sponge were cut into slips and dropped into buckets, in which the water was changed every few minutes, the cutting knife having to be sharpened constantly owing to the calcareous matter embedded in the sponge. I had the impression that even a few minutes' exposure was fatal to sponge, and at first was very careful about this. Afterward I found that several hours in broiling sun did not seem to hurt them, whereas stagnant water would finish them very quickly.

Selecting a spot which showed some natural sponge growth, the cuttings, and the poles or other sinkers, were taken in a small boat and two kedges dropped, with a long light line between. By working along this line the plantings could be kept quite regular, and were easily marked by range stakes set on the adjacent dry banks. We used water varying from eight feet in depth to less than one, as many fine sponge are found almost dry at low water. With a water-glass the plantings could be observed at any time without disturbing them.

We tried to cut the sponge in line with the radial circulating canals, and so that each piece should have one end covered with the cuticle, but as many pieces were not so cut, and still thrived, it may not be at all necessary. Each piece was about an inch square on top, and one and a half to two inches long, averaging about twenty-five to a sponge. We took care not to express the natural juices, or milk, to attach them quickly, and put them into the water immediately.

The poles held about twelve pieces, a foot apart, and





with one assistant I could plant about two hundred cuttings a day. With another helper and a boat with a well, one could plant six to eight hundred a day.

The work was continued at intervals from November, 1889, to June, 1891, with all sorts of conditions and varying results. With but few exceptions the sponge survived the cutting process and began to grow, to be lost or destroyed in various ways. Of those planted back of Elliott's Key in four feet of water, on hard bottom, over seventy-five per cent survived, and doubled in size in six months; these would have matured had I not removed them to prevent loss in the fall gales, which might have blown the water off them. I obtained mature specimens from many other plants, but the loss from defective fastenings, etc., was greater.

I might summarize my conclusions as follows:

Supports: Poles seemed most practical, arranged so as to be elevated a short distance above the bottom, avoiding silt and coral. Individual concrete discs, with lead-covered wire, are excellent but expensive.

Location: In bays and lagoons, free from heavy sea, strong current and too much fresh water, and in moderate depths for easy handling and observation.

Growth: Is faster in strong current, but shape poor and quality apt to be harsh. Under favorable conditions the cuttings double in six months, so eighteen months to two years should produce a marketable sponge. Later experiments suggest four years as the more probable period to count on for practical purposes.

Varieties: The sheepswool only was used, the price of the others being too low.

My early experience in oyster culture from the spawn leads me to think that a similar method with sponge will eventually prove to be the correct one. Until more is known of sponge biology it would be useless to suggest methods, though several points have been to my mind clearly demonstrated. Unfortunately I had to turn my



attention to matters of more immediate pecuniary return, the marine biological laboratory for which I had hoped was never established, and the subject has remained in abeyance.

Much of our loss of cuttings came from the fact that they were necessarily dropped in public waters, so that many of our experimental sponges fell into the hands of the sponge-fishers. The obvious expedient was to have a small area reserved for our experiments by state law, and in this connection we ran into local politics in an annoying way.

The plan was suggested to Mr. Fogarty, who heartily agreed, and promised to see the law introduced and pushed in the state legislature. A rough draft of it, reserving sponging rights to Fogarty, Hine and myself in a small area on the Biscayne Bay banks, with a chart on which was marked the selected tract, was entrusted to a friend of Fogarty's in the Senate, with entire confidence in his good faith.

He, however, saw possibilities beyond our plans and begged to be "taken in." Being accepted as a partner, he proceeded to draft the law. When completed, the bill included the name of the one politician among the charter members, and the proposed area had expanded to cover the eastern half of Biscayne Bay and the Hawk Channel adjacent — a space some twenty miles long by five or more wide, including some of the richest natural sponging grounds on the coast!

This bill, without being referred to the original promoters, was introduced and passed in the Senate, but its "joker" was discovered by a zealous member of the House who got much glory by an eloquent exposure of the attempted steal — incidentally recording Hine, Munroe and Fogarty among the thieves! The bill, very properly, failed. I afterward explained the affair to him, and he assured me that the legislature would have been glad to provide for a proper experimental reservation such as



I had indicated. So once more the grasping hand of the political schemer stood in the way of public-spirited enterprise. The results of my own experiments, and those of the government by Dr. H. F. Moore and myself together some years later, are to be found in the Bulletin of the Bureau of Fisheries, Vol. XXVIII, 1908, under the titles of "The Commercial Sponges and the Sponge Fisheries" and "A Practical Method of Sponge Culture," both by Dr. H. F. Moore.

About the first of December, 1889, Dick and I sailed to Key West and met my mother, Miss McFarlane and Uncle Alfred Munroe on the arrival of the Mallory boat. At Coconut Grove the ladies made themselves comfortable on the upper floor of the boathouse, and Uncle Alfred went to Peacock's, where were several additions to the winter colony.

This winter the state circuit court first convened at Miami, holding its sessions in the old barracks at Fort Dallas. The officials came down the coast by boat and stage, Judge Foster presided, and it was a memorable occasion for the Bay. There were some important cases, but court adjourned early every day and then nearly everybody went fishing.

About this time the growing rivalry between Lake Worth and Biscayne Bay for the possession of the county seat (Dade County then included everything from Broad Creek, about 35 miles south of Miami, up to Jupiter) came to a head. Lake Worth felt that its new privilege of steam communication with Jacksonville, by alternate rail and steamer, gave it unquestionable preëminence in the county, and insisted that the county records and offices be moved up from the "wilderness" of the Miami River. To this, naturally, the Bay settlers did not consent, and the issue remained drawn until the Lake Worth folk took things into their own hands in a raid closely resembling piracy, sailed on Miami after dark in force, loaded the records on board their boats and hustled them





off to a hastily-built court-house at Juno, at the head of Lake Worth. This remained the county seat until the great area of the county and the very diverse interests of the north and south ends came home to all concerned, and Palm Beach County was created. A still later division resulted in a third county — Broward — with its seat at Fort Lauderdale.

The following spring, in accordance with these new arrangements, the annual tax-collecting trip started at Lake Worth, and was made by Fred Dewey in George Potter's sharpie *Heron*. It was just previous to this that Dick and I had made our somewhat adventurous entrance to Lake Worth in *Egret* at midnight, before a northeaster. On that visit I met Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Gilpin of Philadelphia, distant cousins of my old Staten Island friend. Later on they made numerous visits to the Bay and we became good friends. Their son, then a boy, is now helping me prepare these recollections. As a result of our first talk about the Bay, they accompanied Dewey on his tax-collecting trip in 1890, getting a quick but comprehensive introduction to Biscayne waters.



## XVIII

### TWO WRECKS

LATE this spring, the *City of Alexandria*, of the Ward Line, though not a wreck, gave the wreckers and many others plenty of excitement and fun. I was out early one morning, having started at midnight to secure some fine pine weather-boarding seen adrift in the Stream the day before. At dawn we saw a steamer on the Reef almost abreast of the House of Refuge, and were soon alongside. To my amazement I was greeted by name; one of the officers asked for my mother and Miss McFarlane, and proved to be an old acquaintance, Jimmie Anderson, formerly a purser on the White Star Line.

Captain Scott was in no immediate alarm about his ship, which had gone on gently, so he said, but was anxious to telegraph for an adequate tug and barges, and asked me to go to Jupiter to reach the nearest wire, so we returned to Coconut Grove for *Presto* to make the trip. When we got back, the news of the "wreck" had already drawn a number of local wrecking craft from the Bay, but they all lay at a discreet distance, and hailed me with fervent warnings against trying to get on board. "He's crazy! He won't let anybody on board! He said he'd shoot if we came alongside — look out for him, Commodore!"

I laughed. "Oh, that's all right. The only trouble is that you chaps don't know the proper way to board a wreck. Now I'll show you."

"But, Commodore, he's got his gun ready — look! He'll shoot sure. I've tried all the signs" (meaning the Masons, Odd Fellows, etc.) "and he pays no attention."

But *Presto* rounded up; I was received with all courtesy, and the fleet was agog with envious curiosity. For a long





period afterward they continued to ask me how I did it!

The Captain's message was ready, but there were signs of wind in the comparatively clear sky, and I did not think delay advisable. "Why don't you lighter off a little of your cargo in these wrecking boats and try to float her at high water tonight? I think you're going to have some wind and you might get into trouble with the underwriters. Anyway, you're legally obliged to accept any available help from licensed wreckers."

"But, hell! these fellows are all pirates and highwaymen, aren't they? I've heard about the Florida Reef wreckers."

"Oh, no, they're good enough chaps, and you can make a whole lot better bargain with them than with anybody in Key West or Jacksonville." So the fleet got its chance after all, and in a few hours every boat was loaded with the heaviest cargo accessible, and off for shelter in anticipation of the wind which was now evidently making. In this hurried freighting *Presto* had the especial consideration of a comfortable and harmless burden — flour in sacks, with which her cabin was stuffed to its deck. Old John Pent, who did the stowing, made such a good job of it forward that she was somewhat down by the head when she had her load, and the old man had to worm his way into the crowded interior and do a painful lot of back-breaking shifting, to his outspoken disgust.

The wind came that night by ten o'clock, a hard gale, southeast. One wrecker had taken my advice, and followed *Presto* inside Bear's Cut before dark; the Brickells managed to run the bar when the wind struck in. The rest rode it out inside the Reef, and were fortunate to come through.

There was alarm, of course, not to say panic, on the *Alexandria*; two hundred and fifty tons of miscellaneous freight were hastily thrown overboard and on the high



tide, with the rising sea to loosen her, she was backed off, not leaking but pretty severely pounded. Next morning the wind fell, the wreckers returned their loads, and she was away, thankful to escape with the loss of the jettisoned goods.

Then everybody returned to the scene of the stranding. The beach for miles was strewn with everything that would float, and the bottom covered with the heavier articles. At the salving of all this we toiled for many weeks with considerable amusement and profit.

Her 450-lb. kedge anchor and fine new hemp cable had been slipped in her hurry to get clear, and there was considerable rivalry to secure it, as it would mean a good sum to the salvor. But we had it accurately located, and while the others were looking vaguely about for it, *Presto* ran over the cable, and Dick picked it up with the sponge-hook, at the first attempt — to the resentful envy of the others. So strong was this feeling, in fact, that when I landed the anchor at my home instead of taking it to Key West, I was reported by Mr. Brickell as having diverted the anchor to my own use, instead of turning it over to the United States Marshal. Having written to the owners and underwriters that I held the anchor at their disposal, I was, of course, quite within my rights, and was so advised by the judge of the Admiralty Courts. Eventually on the owner's instructions, the anchor was delivered to the marshal and salvage paid upon it.

In the first inspection of the goods on the Reef, "Uncle Jack" Peacock had discovered a great pile of stone bottles containing Scotch ale. He managed to get hold of one with a sponge-hook and sampled it, and the heavy contents, which ran very high in alcohol, greatly tickled his palate. He came ashore that evening elated over this find, and promising a treat to anybody who could fish up the elusive bottles the next morning.

There was always a bit of professional jealousy between the wreckers and me, though we were friendly enough



in ordinary relations. My connections with their more-or-less-hated rival, the Merritt and Chapman Wrecking Co., and with Lloyd's, sometimes worked to their disadvantage, and they retaliated by denying me the full freedom of the wrecking fraternity. News of wrecks was not immediately shared and in various small ways they were eager to "take a rise out of me."

I was always ready to enjoy this sort of game, and when the news of the Scotch ale leaked out, I thought I saw a chance to score. Taking Dick into consultation I planned grappling irons out of oyster-tongs, but operated in such fashion that they were manageable on a very long pole — for the bottles lay in some twenty feet of water. Firing up the forge, we two conspirators spent the first half of the night on building this tool, and when it was finished, quietly made sail on *Presto* and were off to Bear's Cut. All this region was by now perfectly familiar to both of us in the blackest night, and we had no difficulty in getting out the cut and to the scene of the grounding before the first streak of dawn appeared.

We hoped that the wreckers would consider the goods on the Reef safe enough for the moment, and take a good night's rest before returning to the job, and so it proved. We had two hours of full daylight before the first wrecker came out of Bear's Cut and the new iron worked well, so by that time all the ale, except one bottle, was snugly stowed on *Presto's* cabin floor. That one bottle stood upright, nested in the coral with only the bottom protruding, and we could not get hold of it.

When the fleet arrived, all set for a good drink, *Presto's* crew was busily tonging up bolts and other iron which made a good part of the material. An eager hunt followed, needless to say without results, and amid growing excitement. Uncle Jack picked out the spot, but there was nothing there. The search spread over the adjoining reef, but it was bare of stone bottles. Uncle Jack began to get some very black looks; they told him he must have





had something else to drink, and dreamed about the ale, and they insisted that the proper consequence of such behavior was that he should be thrown overboard and made to swim ashore.

He stuck to his guns, however, insisting he knew just where the ale had been, and he soon cried out triumphantly, "There you are, boys, there's one of 'em now!" pointing to the sole remaining bottle. Various cumbersome tools had been brought, but none of them would lift the bottle; at last somebody dived for it, and it was quickly shared among the now thoroughly puzzled men. On the strength of it Uncle Jack was let off the threatened penalties, and all turned to search for other possible treasures, among which a case or two of lager beer offered partial consolation.

Strangely enough, no one seemed to suspect *Presto* and no one chanced to look into her cabin. After a decent interval she departed for Coconut Grove, and before anyone else returned all the bottles were safely concealed in the rear of my boathouse. There they lay for some time, while the question of what had become of them grew into more and more of a mystery, and furnished matter for many an evening of puzzled discussion. I was consulted for any possible solution — but could not suggest any! At last, when the game was played out, and the affair had taken its place as an insoluble mystery in the traditions of Coconut Grove, I invited everybody to come and treat himself to Scotch ale!

Meanwhile the cargo had not been without value to the Bay. A considerable quantity of excellent flour, in bags, had been thrown overboard and was washed up on the beach, and it was soon found that the water had not penetrated more than an inch, the heart of the bags being dry and good. Many a loaf of unusually good bread resulted. One item was three Herring's safes, which had been crushed by the ship in floating; these we later took apart, and from the pieces built the one now in my office.



Among the beachcombers was one Seminole, Johnny Jumper, with three squaws. They were out for anything that came ashore, but Johnny was especially interested in a case of pineapple cheese and another of "Beef, Iron and Wine" — in which we may assume that the third item caught his eye. At all events he gorged himself with the cheese and the tonic — surely the most extraordinary of nectar and ambrosia — and subsided into a comatose state on the beach! He was too heavy for the squaws to carry, so they built a palmetto thatch over him and left him to his fate, evidently thinking it probable he would never "come to." It is sufficient evidence of the vigor and stamina of the race that he did eventually revive, and returned to the Everglades none the worse.

So the *City of Alexandria* came and went, bringing her little excitement to the life of the Bay and adding her quota to the store of its memories and traditions.

In June of this year we were treated to one of the finest exhibitions of a water-spout that I believe ever was accorded to anyone. Beginning off Cocoplum Point, it assumed full proportions when nearly off the Grove and about a mile and a half distant. It appeared white against a black cloud, and was nearly centered below a double rainbow. The water of the Bay was a vivid green, with the white-caps and the vapor driven from the base of the spout illuminated by the sunlight, making a combination necessarily rare. Some years after I read the description of a similar one seen on the Central American coast by a United States naval officer, during an early survey of the Isthmus for the canal.

One of the most profitable wrecks of my experience occurred in the summer of 1895 — that of the Norwegian tramp *Ingrid*, whose name-board and figure-head are now on my boathouse. She was loaded with a million feet of lumber consigned to Rio, and went on the Reef north of Fowey Rock light in midsummer. The underwriters took her over, and attempted to salve her cargo, but after





loading two scows with a hundred thousand feet each they found the costs prohibitive, and offered the remainder for sale as it lay. I was the only bidder, and took it for \$1 — certainly the lowest price on record for eight hundred thousand feet of lumber!

The summer, needless to say, was a busy one, and all in all we were unexpectedly fortunate; in the end we succeeded in lightering and rafting off some three-fourths of the remaining cargo, and stacking it either at Coconut Grove or on Cape Florida. The sawmill in the Factory was frequently busy thereafter working this heavy stuff up into building material, most of which went into the early houses in Coconut Grove and Miami.

Among other botanical interests, Mr. Holden had been especially attracted by the mahogany of the keys, locally called "madeira." It is the true *sweetenia mahogany*, but the timber from it is much darker, harder, redder and more elaborately grained than the usual Honduras wood, owing to the fact that it grows very slowly on the barren rock ridges of the keys. It is not only a handsome material for boat fittings and finish, but being immune from attack by toredos, and extremely durable and strong, is often used for such timbers as especially require such qualities. In the fall of 1890 Mr. Holden's interest in the "madeira" culminated in the activities of the "South Florida Lumber Co." This was formed by his son, John Holden, together with William Barrows, a Mystic shipbuilder (who has recently returned to Coconut Grove), Albert Caillet and others, to cut this timber and sell it in New York. I had no interest in the company, but consented to help by locating the timber. This was an arduous task, since it involved "cruising" the entire area of the keys down to Largo and Upper Matecumbe, and some of the adjacent mainland, marking down saleable logs, and contracting for their purchase with the owners. The usual price was \$1 each, on the stump. Much of this hammock land was well-nigh impenetrable jungle, laced with



viciously thorny cactus and networks of vine, and sheltering some rattlesnakes; but there were no accidents, save one hornet-sting!

The survey was not particularly encouraging. The timber was scattered, with few large trees, the average diameter being eleven inches, with a very few as high as three feet; while in the low forest the trunks were not high nor particularly straight. Nevertheless the company proceeded to cut the trees, and with the aid of a naphtha launch, a hoisting engine and a half mile of wire rope, stacked them as near the inner shore of the keys as possible. They then chartered a three-masted schooner and loaded her by boating off the logs, and so they reached Constantine's Hardwood Lumberyard in New York.

Here, in spite of their superior qualities, their variation from standard mahogany was against them. They were condemned for their small size and for the dark streaks in the grain, and were eventually sold for tool handles and such purposes at a fraction of the hoped-for rate; a considerable quantity of it went to Wheeler and Wilson for sewing-machine cases. This ended the company's activities, after nearly three years of work. Many stacks of logs were left where they lay, and most of this I afterward recovered in the *Pelican* with the help of Billy Albury — a half-dozen loads. It was sawn into heavy plank at the Factory, and at last most of it was cut into frames for *Carib*, a 50-foot ketch which I built for Mr. Haigh of the Royal Thames Yacht Club, in 1901. Some was shipped to Brown's yard on Staten Island, and bits of it appeared in the fittings of many boats in the next few years.

This year I was elected to my only public office — that of Justice of the Peace — a service of which the only records extant are the certificate of election, and some facetious congratulations from my friends. James E. Howell, Chancellor of New Jersey, for example, denounced me in these frank terms:

"So you are a Justice of the Peace, you contemner of all



law, and breaker of all peace! By entering civil life and politics, you have forfeited all claims to the respect of us sailors. You have deserted us, and we repudiate you, if it please the Court.

"A letter from Tommy Hine today announces that he is going to leave the state. I divined the reason at once; he feared the awful sword of justice. In the hand of blind-folded woman it is hard to tell whom it will cut first. I imagine you with your fish-scale in one hand, your sword in the other, your rags over your eyes, dispensing with justice right and left.

"I wish you would send me a list of your titles. What beside Commodore, Fish Commissioner, and J. P.?"

Well may he have asked, for an early settler with any range of knowledge at all was forced to tax his ingenuity to the limit to meet the demands and opportunities of this already "busy wilderness."

In early Biscayne Bay days there were few, if any, of the professions represented among its settlers, though when I arrived here I found a Dr. Potter and his brother, George, living at the mouth of Little River in a neat two-story cottage. I think they were from Cleveland, Ohio, and had come to benefit, if possible, the health of the brother. Shortly after their establishment, the Lake Worth colony succeeded in opening up communication from the North that began to draw settlers and winter visitors to a small extent, and later on appealed to the Potters so forcibly that they migrated to what is now West Palm Beach. This left us without any medical or surgical assistance whatever, but such was the abnormal good health of this scattered community, and its freedom from accidents, that the subject was little thought of. Between Aunt Bella Peacock and myself, and a kit of ship carpenter's tools, combined with a natural knowledge of old New England remedies and procedure, inherited doubtless from Grandmother Munroe through my father, we succeeded very well. Indeed, we finally acquired too good a





reputation, which in the case I am about to relate might have occasioned trouble.

A stranger sailed into my boat landing one day with the quecrest expression on his unkempt features that I had ever noticed on mortal man. He handed me a slip of paper on which was scrawled, "Sent here to you from Indian River to have my jaw put back in place." I wondered no longer at his strange expression and half-starved condition, but proceeded to find out what I could about it; not a word could he speak. He had been sick with fever and in yawning dislocated his jaw. No one up the river could help him, so he was told to go to Coconut Grove, and had been three weeks on the way.

Then I knew his case was hopeless. It meant surgery of great skill beyond mine but I hadn't the heart to tell him so, thinking there still might be a chance. I suggested this, but implied that it would be exceedingly painful, to which he at once assented, so we got him up to the Peacock Inn and told them to feed him carefully for a day or so as best they could. I then retired to my "office" and got out my "authorities" — an old Whittakers Almanack, "The New England Almanac and Farmer's Friend" by David Daboll, New London, Connecticut, "Knots, Bends and Splices" and several others somewhat doubtful. With an assortment of rope yarns, purchases, strops and various diameters of wooden toggles and with a convenient tree for anchorage we were ready for the patient, and he, with renewed strength and a shave, ready for us. What that poor fellow, harnessed to that tree, suffered under heroic treatment without a whimper will never be known. I was the first to sing out "Enough" and refuse to proceed further, to his evident disappointment. In a day or so I got him off on the mail schooner for Key West with a letter to the Marine Hospital, and later heard from him at Mobile, where at last a successful operation was achieved by cutting the muscle and re-



setting the jaw. The Key West doctors having declined the job under such circumstances, our department of surgery concluded it would still remain at the call of the people.

I might add that during the years spent here I have served officially at various times, as special agent for the United States Bureau of Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture (including the Weather Bureau) and the Geological Survey, as correspondent for the Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Lighthouse Department, 7th District, and as Chairman of the Board of Pilot Commissioners. Besides writing the government bulletins already mentioned in connection with the green turtle protection, and the sponge fisheries, I have been called on to assist in compiling information for other bulletins, for example, "Natural History of Paradise Key and the Near-by Everglades of Florida" by W. E. Safford (Smithsonian report); "Sphyræna Barracuda; its Morphology, Habits and History" by E. W. Gudger (Carnegie Institute); "Notes on Biscayne Bay, Florida, with Reference to its Adaptability as the Site of a Marine Hatching and Experiment Station" by Hugh Smith (United States Bulletin published in 1896); a "Report on the Leaf Fibre of the United States Detailing Results of Recent Investigations Relating to Florida Sisal Hemp, the False Sisal Hemp Plant of Florida, and other Fibre-Producing Agaves; Bowstring Hemp, Pineapple Fibre, New Zealand Flax and Bear Grass," by Charles Richards Dodge (United States Bulletin, published in 1893); "The Compound Eyes in Crustaceans" by G. H. Parker (Harvard College Museum of Comparative Zoölogy); "The Fibre Bearing Plants of Florida" by Charles W. Parsons ("Morning News Print," Savannah, Georgia, 1895), which especially pertains to sansevieria culture.





## XIX

### FACTORY AND BARNACLE, 1890

IN NOVEMBER, 1890, my mother, Miss McFarlane and my old friend Billy Jacobs, a famous oarsman, sailed with me from New York to Key West. Dick Carney met us there in *Presto*, and we were soon settled at Coconut Grove.

Mother had come early from the North on the advice of her physician, in the hope that the Southern climate would better matters. She did not improve, however, and within a few weeks passed away, at the Peacock Inn, amidst the loving care of her many friends. Her remains, temporarily interred in my grounds, were later taken to Concord, Massachusetts, and lie there in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery beside those of her loved ones. She was the best of mothers. What more can be said?

I turned once more to the search for a profitable business on the Bay, and the canning of fruits, especially pineapples, seemed to offer the best opening. This winter we formed the Biscayne Manufacturing Co. for the purpose, and erected the Factory on the shore, south of my boathouse. The building was to be so known to the neighborhood throughout all changes of occupancy and use for the next 35 years, until it was torn down in April, 1926. The company's officers were Ezra Osborn, president, John Holden, vice-president, T. A. Hine, treasurer, and myself, superintendent.

Pineapples were first planted in Florida by Captain Benjamin Baker, about 1860, on Plantation Key, his slips being imported from Cuba. By 1890 there were many plantations scattered along the keys from Matecumbe to Elliott's, the latter being quite closely settled. Most of the planters came from the Bahamas, and



made the keys their permanent homes. In 1884 Captain T. E. Richards introduced the "pines" on the Indian River. After 1886, when the *Rockledge* began to run from Titusville to Melbourne, they could be shipped by river steamer and rail, and in a dozen years the crop had grown to some 50,000 crates annually. The profits now began to attract general attention; many ambitious young men, including a considerable colony of Englishmen, went into the business, and by 1910 the region was shipping nearly a million crates. Wide tracts on the sandhills of the Indian River shore were cleared and planted, and extravagant expectations of the future of the industry were common. Many by-products developed good businesses — preserves, wines, and so forth, including Captain Richards's "cordial," previously mentioned.

But when all looked fairest, disaster overtook the planters in the form of a parasitic disease — a nematode which produced the "brown wilt." In a few years every field was abandoned, and the Indian River pineapple passed into history. The Key product had already done so, with the hurricane of 1906, after which it was never replanted.

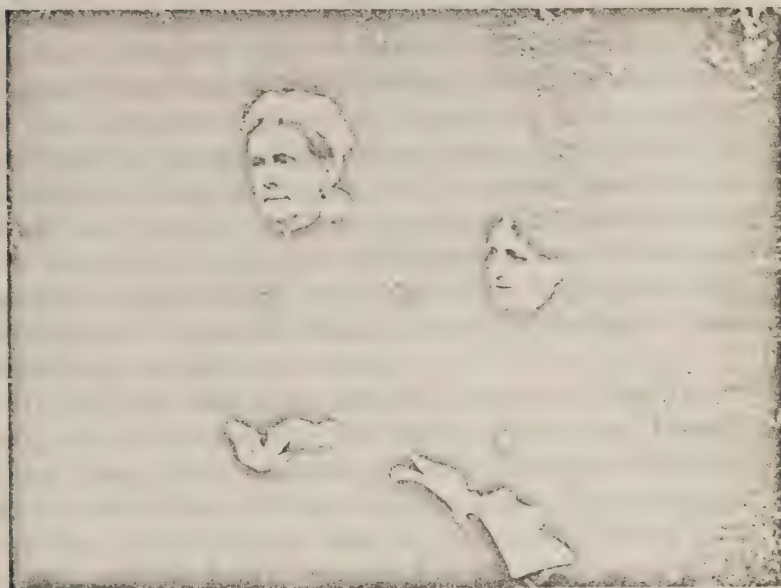
At the time of my story, in 1890, pineapples were grown mainly on the keys, and were their chief crop, being picked green and shipped to Baltimore and New York by schooner. Owing to bad weather, non-arrival of vessels and so forth, it frequently happened that much fruit became too ripe to ship, and the planters sustained heavy losses. To prevent this, with profit to both sides, was the object of the company.

Several factors, however, had not been properly calculated and one of the most important, labor, was among these. The Bay population having always lived easily, was quite unreliable, and importing labor for the short season was out of the question. This, with an unfortunate speculation in glass jars and a rapid rise in the price of fruit, made it impossible to compete with Nassau and





AT THE FACTORY WHARF



MRS. THOMAS MUNROE AND MISS FLORA M'FARLANE





Baltimore factories. We then turned to desiccated coconut, tried our hand at guava jelly, ran a sawmill with some profit, and finally wound up the concern with a few hundred dollars to our credit.

One of the investors in the company was Count Jean de Hedouville, a Belgian gentleman of wide travel. He had a ranch in Wyoming, on which he spent a part of every year, and his first visit to the Bay was in quest of a French friend, Nugent, who had recently settled at Coconut Grove, and whose sudden love of Florida was a mystery to his friends in France. De Hedouville, who had been a captain in the French Army, and through that a friend of Nugent, was asked to look him up, and when he did so the unmatched climate appealed to him as it had to Nugent, and he, too, became a resident, buying a lot from me, next south of my home. He also made purchases in the future Buena Vista which brought him at last a large fortune, to the comfort of himself and his relatives in Belgium as well, who owed their support after the war to the prosperity of Biscayne Bay.

James L. Nugent was a thoroughly delightful man and a valued friend to all early habitués of Coconut Grove. He was a grandson of one of Napoleon's Irish generals, who rose to considerable prominence, and rooted his descendants deep in French soil. He was a man of wide travel and culture, and a charming conversationalist, with extremely simple and wholesome tastes. He became an officer in the British Army, and later, having met with considerable financial losses, came to America, and weak lungs brought him south.

He married Miss Doe, one of a colony of English settlers, who died soon after the birth of their son, Patrick. Many years later he married Miss Florence Baldwin, head of the Baldwin School at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and they divided their time between the Philadelphia suburb and the new colony at Coconut Grove until his death. Few lives could hold wider variety or more



picturesque contrasts than this, from Paris and the "great world" to the primitive Florida wilderness, and back to the life of luxury and fashion, and no one could have established himself more deeply in the affections of his friends, or be more sincerely missed than he.

Albert Caillet was an early member of the Yacht Club and a shareholder in the Mahogany Co. He was a friend of Haigh's and always remained so, though after a few years he returned to Paris and made his home there.

This spring of '91 Dick Carney had memorable evidence that the wilderness was still with us. Walking down the boathouse path in the dusk he came face to face with a huge "painter" or puma. Having started for the backwoods, it was not to be stopped by this unexpected man, but leaped straight at him, knocking him flat, and immediately bounded on up the path, leaving Dick personally uninjured but with his clothes torn into shreds from top to toe — a thoroughly scared man! On being told of this, one of our Seminole friends, Little Tiger, eagerly promised, "Me get um," and sure enough, returned with the skin in a few days. It was a powerful beast, nearly ten feet from nose to tail. This was one of the last seen near the Bay.

I parted with *Presto* this year, selling her to a yachtsman from New York, who took her to the West Coast of Florida. I was sorry to see her go, as she was one of my best designs, and had never failed me in the five years and more since launching. But a larger boat was now better suited to my needs, and *Micco* was designed to take her place. She was 50 feet overall, with slightly greater beam than *Presto* to give her more windward speed, and she was — and is — a fast and able boat.

I went north to oversee her building, and in the fall sailed her south, inside, with Thomas and Ned Hine and Dick Carney. A full account of the trip is given in "The Cruise of the *Micco*" by J. E. Howell and T. A. Hine. Our most serious trouble was in the Albemarle and





Chesapeake Canal. A small tug towed the clumsy schooner *Ely* of Philadelphia, which frequently ran ashore in the high wind, and *Micco*, trailing behind the schooner, was entirely disregarded. When the *Ely* nosed into the mud *Micco* had much ado to avoid telescoping her, and it was a strenuous time for all hands.

Finally, in Coinjock Bay, after dark, the schooner banged ashore again, and *Micco* perforce was run on the mud too, to avoid a collision. This time the tug jerked the *Ely* loose and proceeded with her, leaving *Micco* to her fate. Next morning the wind had blown the water out of the bay to the extent of eighteen inches, and *Micco* lay helpless for three days. Then with infinite labor and muss, her ballast and stores were unloaded, and another tug pulled her off. At Beaufort she was beached, and her bottom found in good shape, despite this rough treatment.

The party had an interesting visit to the traveling sand-hills at Nag's Head. Up to 70 feet in height, they move with the wind, going sometimes 100 yards in one gale and swamping trees, houses and everything in their path.

The outstanding incident of this trip in my memory was a run before a fierce norther from Cape Canaveral to Jupiter, 105 nautical miles against a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  knot current in the Stream, in ten hours. For four hours it blew so hard that we could carry only a reefed trysail yet the boat behaved perfectly and was easily steered. At six A.M. we passed a Mallory liner hove to, and her Captain told me afterward that he had been in that position all night. When I said that I had had over two hours of sound sleep, his language was dreadful!

In the winter of 1890-1, Mr. Charles Richards Dodge, specialist of the Department of Agriculture in Washington, had made a preliminary trip around the Florida coast from Jupiter to Fort Myers with a view to the possibility of developing a sisal hemp industry in the state. This had been one of the main objects of Dr. Perrine's



proposed experiments in 1840, cut short by his death at Indian Key, and both there and on Lignum Vitæ were, and still are, thousands of descendants of the sisal, or agave (Henequin) plants set out by him as seedlings from Yucatan. As these plants had survived without care, it seemed evident that the climate was suitable, and the large sisal industry in many of the Bahama Islands at the same latitude suggested great possibilities for Florida. At this time the United States was importing some \$5,000,000 worth of sisal fiber from Yucatan — 80 per cent of their total product — so there was evidently a large market.

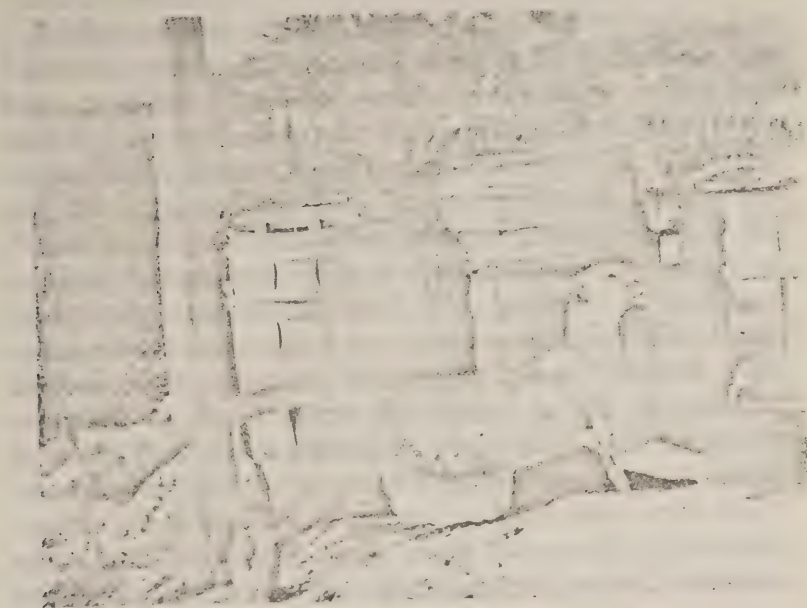
This trip, made partly in Kirk Munroe's boat *Allapatta*, was so far encouraging as to justify a detailed survey of the region, for which \$8,000 was appropriated. In the fall of '91 Mr. Dodge arrived on the Bay to direct this work, and as I was glad to see any possibility of a permanent and expanding industry, I arranged with him to take over *Micco*, with my own services, for the necessary transportation, and leased to him the Factory, which with its power made an excellent experiment station. So the winter of 1891-2 was spent in a pleasant and profitable manner. This work is described in full in various bulletins of the department. On the departure of Mr. Dodge in the spring I was appointed special agent to complete the work, which occupied me until July.

A Van Buren "decorticating" machine, to crush the leaves and separate the pulp from the fiber, was set up, and many tons of leaves were put through it. These were mostly from the true sisal, or agave, taken from Indian and Lignum Vitæ keys, but experimental lots of fiber were also produced from the agave *decipiens*, or false sisal (a thorn-edged variety, common in Florida, but of very inferior fiber), from ramie, a fibrous grass, and from pineapple leaves, and some attention was paid to palmetto and coconut leaves and *sansevieria* as possible sources of fiber. So far as the work of the winter went the





TYPICAL KEY-PLANTER'S HOME



DICK'S "PAINTER" (PCMA)





prospects were promising, and there is no question that excellent sisal fiber can be produced in Florida. But other products, especially fruits and vegetables, have proven so unbelievably profitable as to drive out all thought of sisal production in comparison.

This discussion, even before our experiments at Coconut Grove, led to the formation of the Florida Fibre Co., in the spring of 1891. They bought 1,300 acres of land on Middle River, near Fort Lauderdale, and took some thousands of slips from Indian Key. Their planting operations lagged, however, and the enterprise came to nothing. Presumably their lands became too valuable for sisal culture within a short time, as both canal and railroad were talked of soon after their purchase, and the railroad came to Lauderdale within five years. Other discouraging factors were the high cost of labor, and finally the frequent appearance of small spots of decay in the leaves, the result of frost, which cut the fiber and destroyed its quality. That and the growing tourist development finally ended the movement.

In the summer of 1891, my Coconut Grove home, The Barnacle, was built, as a bungalow, by C. J. Peacock, Joe Frow and Ben Newbold — the latter's finger marks still showing on the under side of the piazza roof. The frame was of wreck timber, sawn on the Factory mill, while siding, flooring, ceiling, shingles and millwork came from Pensacola. It had the rather unusual arrangement of the original bungalows, with a central room (in this case octagonal) open to the roof. This we used as a dining room, and it was always airy and comfortable. The foundations were deep-set pitch-pine posts, treated with crude-oil to make them distasteful to the destructive termites, commonly known as white ants, and the frame was bolted down to them as a precaution against hurricanes. The Barnacle remained a bungalow until more space was needed, in 1908, when the whole, as it stood, was lifted, and a new first floor inserted below. Later my



own library was added, as a separate wing, and in 1928 the whole house was remodeled and stuccoed. The house has been through several severe blows without serious damage, including the disastrous gale of September, 1926, which wrecked Miami.

The abundant spring-water of the shore, while organically pure, and beautifully clear and tasteless, was somewhat hard, and injurious to some constitutions. With the new house, therefore, we made provision for a rain-water supply which has always been satisfactory, giving us pure, cool and absolutely soft water for bathing as well as drinking.

With comfortable quarters in the Barnacle, there was no further need for a large yacht, and *Wabun*, 40 feet overall, was designed and started at Brown's. Having had some trouble with springing *Micco's* traditional thin centerboard in the almost unavoidable collisions with coral heads, I planned an unbreakably heavy board for *Wabun* which roused the immediate comment that if the board couldn't break when so run aground, it would tear the trunk out of the boat! This was put up to "Uncle Cris" — "Can you build a boat which will hold this board?" "Sure," said he, in effect, and the heavy board has now been in *Wabun* through thirty-five years of use and abuse without giving a particle of trouble. It weighs close to half a ton, and makes an appreciable item of ballast. It has many times brought *Wabun* up all standing on both hard and soft bottom, without injury to itself or the boat. Since it holds the boat as immovable as a dredge's spuds, it has inevitably been used as a temporary mooring, while in making landings under power (*Wabun* came to the indignity of an auxiliary engine in her later life) it descended to the humble uses of a brake! Entirely satisfactory, this feature has been used in every boat of my design since.

Another innovation in *Wabun* was battened sails, which have been successfully copied in other boats since.





Three flexible ash battens crossed each sail just below the reef-points and extended a considerable projecting angle on the leach which gave the sails an odd batwing effect, and earned the name of "Chinese Junk" for *Wabun* in many strange harbors. They greatly simplified reefing, the sail almost furled itself when lowered, and could be safely let go by the run at any time; and in coming about or at anchor with the sail set, there was none of the usual violent and destructive slatting of the sail and gear.

In July of 1892, the fiber work being completed and *Wabun* laid down at Tottenville, *Micco* sailed for New York direct with Walter H. Browne, Dick Carney, Joe Curry and myself. With only average weather at the start, and ending in a fierce north gale against which we fought from Barnegat to Sandy Hook, we made the run in six days and a half, which stands today as the best record for sailing boats of her class. This run was described in detail in the "Rudder" for February, 1896.

My keenest memory of it was a glorious sail on the last night. At noon of Friday, July 15, we were in lat. 37-33, lon. 74-39, after 24 hours of baffling breezes which gave us only 66 miles — our poorest day's run. That afternoon the wind gradually freshened from SSW, and by sunset we were roaring along to the queen's taste, in a smother of foam, all light sails set and the sea making rapidly, while the full moon brightened in the east and gleamed on the whitecaps that were beginning to top the seas.

At eight o'clock Curry and I turned in, with special injunctions to Dick not to let his enthusiasm lead him into "carrying on" too long, but to strike his kites if the wind hardened. At midnight we were called, and my first impression as I crawled up the leaping companionway and stuck my head out of the quiet cabin into the turmoil of wind and water was of a howling gale and a mercilessly driven boat, skimming over the tops of the seas like a scared cat, and swooping down into the troughs, where only her topsail caught the wind. I was as mad as a hatter



at first, but Dick only said quietly, "Oh, she's all right, Commodore, she's going like a bird!" Browne had no comments, and I soon began to realize that wild as the scene appeared, with the huge rollers, white-crested, tumbling under the white moon, the boat trembling under the lash of the wind and leaping northward like a race-horse on the home-stretch, and the bellow of wind and wave stunning our ears, the little ship was really making excellent weather of it! Certainly few boats of her size would have been as comfortable in such a sea, and still fewer would carry such sail and handle as well — for she was steering sweetly, easily and reliably.

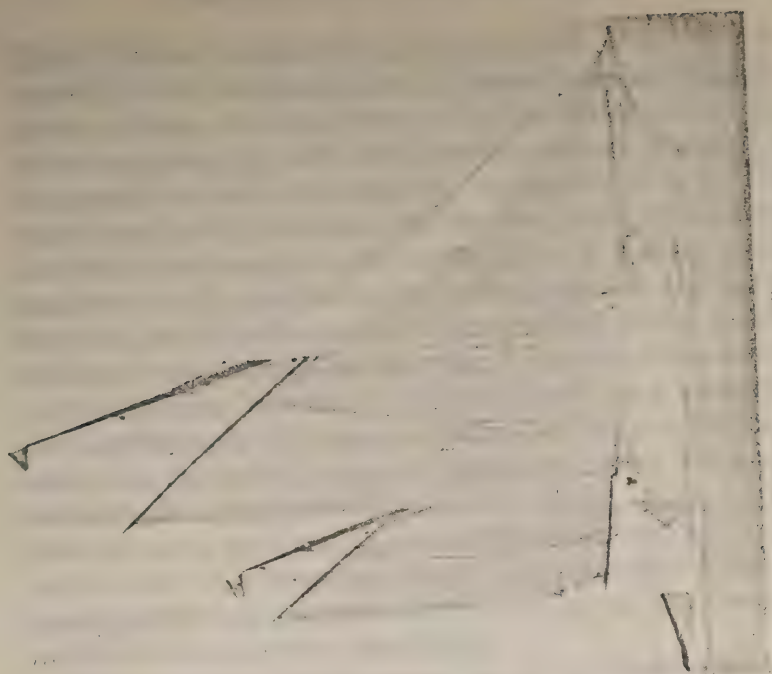
I took the wheel until four o'clock, and never was a more gorgeous scene. A few fleecy clouds drove across the high moon, and the yacht boiled along beneath her great press of canvas, while the big rollers, foam-crested, crept slowly up under her stern, and tossed her into the sky. It all made an uplifting and inspiring sight.

At daylight we picked up Absecon light, and at eight A.M. had it abeam. Then the wind hauled to N by W, and the light sails came down. During the afternoon we thrashed to windward against a heavy and variable wind, reefing and shaking out the mainsail three times. Off Long Branch a heavy cloud-bank swept down from the north, and it turned so cold that we routed out all the coats, mittens and extra clothes we could find — strange for the middle of July. We turned Sandy Hook at 6:30, and anchored off Old Orchard Shoal on Staten Island, under a very strange sky, recognized after dark as an aurora borealis.

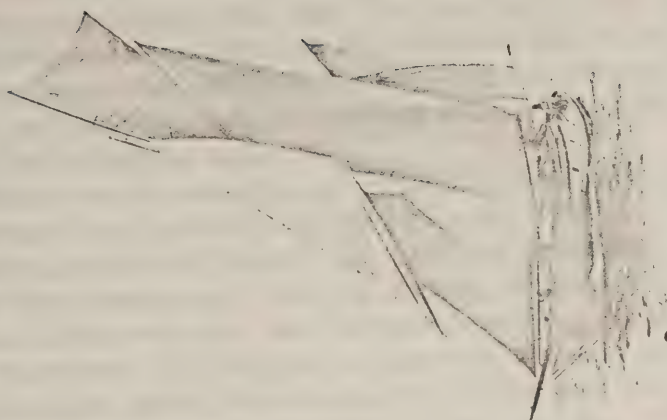
Next morning we sailed up to Quarantine, getting an enthusiastic salute of flags and sheets waved from the Austen house at Clifton, and heard a wonderful report from the port doctor of the aurora.

My crew was firmly set on its sea-legs by now, and quite ready to tackle the north Atlantic, or anything else, in *Micco*. We were invited to join the Atlantic Yacht Club cruise by our friends the Jewetts, and proceeded to Black





"WABUN"



"MICCO"





Rock Harbor, Connecticut, for the start. For the next morning's run to Morris Cove, Commodore Banks kindly gave us fifteen minutes' start of the fleet in consideration of our seagoing rig, with the friendly purpose of saving us the mortification of arriving last, or even out of sight. The wind was light southwest, and the fleet, with all its kites, had only just caught us by noon. Then a vicious squall made up in the northwest and when it struck, the entire fleet was quickly stripped of almost all sail. Being a little offshore and obscured by the rain, I let everything stand, only stationing Dick by the main halyards, and managed to drag through. Of course we were soon 'way in the lead, and when the wind let up and the air cleared a bit, it was certainly amusing to see everybody making sail in a wild hurry to catch us! Only one succeeded before we anchored in the cove — Commodore Banks's big schooner — and he immediately sent a launch congratulating us, but rescinding the fifteen minutes handicap!

We had a delightful cruise as far as Shelter Island. Shortly after our return I sold *Micco* to Arthur Merriman of Manchester, Massachusetts, and with him and Walter Browne took her around Cape Cod in another quick run. I was sorry to part with her. She has had a long and creditable career. At the age of thirty-four she entered a Bermuda race and finished second in her class by just an hour and a half, in spite of carrying away a rotten mast-head and rerigging under way.

*Wabun* was by now nearly completed, and when she was rigged and outfitted we left in her for Florida. Tom Browne (brother of Walter) Joe Curry of Key West, my sister Mrs. Austen, and Alice M. Austen, accompanied us through the canals and the Chesapeake as far as Annapolis, Maryland. At Norfolk we heard of another ketch-rigged yacht ahead of us bound for Florida, and our immediate interest in that rumor shows how few yachts there were, even so recently as that, traveling southward in the fall.



The trip was without important incident. At Charleston we had a cold wave so severe that while beating up the harbor the salt spray froze on deck. At St. Augustine we finally overtook the rumored ketch, which was the *Susie B* of New Haven, with the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Benton and their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Fowler, also of New Haven — a very pleasant party. They had had some rough experiences and decided to turn back, but reconsidered this when I offered my services as pilot, and we sailed southward together next day.

That evening, however, they struck further trouble. We lay at Matanzas Inlet, ready for an early start the next morning, and while we were eating supper on *Wabun* the *Susie B* party rowed past in their small boat. It was ebb tide and quite rough on the bar, so I called to them not to go outside the point on any account. Not heeding the warning, but fortunately landing the ladies first, out they went. In a few minutes they were in the breakers, hanging on to the capsized boat, and being carried out to sea.

This was out of our sight, and the first we knew of it was when the panic-stricken women came running back along the inside beach in the gathering darkness. We could guess what had happened without waiting to hear their story, and did the only thing possible. The wind was strong on shore, and I was sure that if they could hold on to the boat they would soon drift into the usual ebb-tide eddy and come up on the beach. So we hurried northward in the darkness and soon found them, all in good shape except Fowler, whom we had to carry a mile or more back to the boats. He recovered by next morning and we proceeded on our voyage, the remainder of which was uneventful.

In the regatta of the following spring, 1893, *Wabun* firmly established her already good reputation for speed by sailing completely out of her class and giving the large boats of the class above a hard race. In the end she was beaten only by *Nethla*, out of the whole fleet, and won great praise.





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PART TWO

*By* VINCENT GILPIN



## FOREWORD

HERE ends the Commodore's informal book of reminiscence, which was not intended to be either complete or chronological. I have filled out and rearranged the narrative, and now add the following chapters to bring it down to date. The new material comes mainly from conversations with the Commodore, which always brought out his trenchant phraseology, his detailed and colorful memory, and his vivid appreciation of the tang and savor of life.

The narrative is still incomplete; the more one talks with the Commodore, the more one discovers unexpected mines of golden tales, often turning on some trivial incident forgotten even by himself until accidentally suggested. I can only hope that we have between us assembled a faithful outline of his life, with sufficient detail to suggest its true richness of color.

These talks came at various times, most often in the evening, when I was living on the water at Coconut Grove and rowed ashore after supper. The nights themselves were such as come only to South Florida, in our country, and rouse in memory a wondering longing. The sky was a canopy of blue-black velvet, dotted and splashed with brilliant stars, and sweeping down to meet the rippling water, which likewise gleamed with stars of phosphorescence. Venus hung golden above the pines in the west, her reflection a shimmering path of light. The sea-breeze was soft, warm and dry.

Many lights were visible from *Wabun's* mooring. North, over the land, a widespread glow filled the sky above Miami, the busy, growing city. Northeastward a string of lamps led the eye along the three-mile causeway to Miami Beach, where hotels and casinos twinkled gaily. Eastward, in the Bay, winking beacons marked the



shoals; beyond, a red eye stood for Cape Florida Channel, and still farther, fourteen miles out on the Florida Reef, Fowey Rock gleamed and faded. Inshore, close above, the clubhouse light burned, and between the coconut fronds shone the friendly lights of the Commodore's home, the Barnacle.

Through the silent darkness one might hear a note of muffled music from the tree-hidden houses, or the tentative voice of a mocking bird which felt the coming spring, or perhaps the hoarse and resonant "whoo-whoo-*whooo!*" of the great horned owl. Sometimes the keen clear whistle of the Key West train swept through the pineland from the distant track and echoed about the Bay. They were proper nights for yarns!

Many a time we landed under these conditions and picked our way through the warm dusk, past the boat-house with its ghostly figure-heads, by the huge oleanders, among the rustling land-crabs, busy with nocturnal foraging, between the cane-angle and the giant bamboo, past the avocados and the frangipani and the big mango tree, to the Commodore's library.

This is a generous room, in a separate wing, filled with pictures and books, a large table in the center covered with papers and surrounded by easy chairs. The books are mainly of nautical subject or association, with a large proportion of rare volumes, many autographed or privately printed. The pictures are of boats, and more boats, and of family and friends. Here is the model of the schooner *America*, a copy of Page's portrait of Farragut, the old Austen home on Staten Island, the gorgeous cabins of *Samar*, and so forth — all parts of the narrative. Each picture has a story worth hearing, and together they cover a larger cross-section of the owner's life than any other library walls I know.

Here is always cheery welcome and exchange of news; then the talk circles around to the water, by way of the last published design, the shipping news, or the newest





arrival among the yachts on the Bay. Then comes some suggestion of old larks or high adventure, the Commodore's jolly laugh rings out, and he is off, with sparkling eye, on the flood tide of memory.

Useless to try to describe these talks — their kindly humor and philosophy, the life of rich adventure and association they cover, the wealth of detail concerning people and places far away in both time and distance, the joy in life and action and achievement. They are but inadequately reflected in these pages; to those who share them they are an unforgettable privilege.

VINCENT GILPIN



## I

### RESCUE OF SCHOONER *BISCAYNE*

IN THE fall of 1893, at the end of her first year in Coconut Grove, *Wabun* figured in an interesting piece of salvage work. Harry Fozzard (now a St. John's bar pilot) had built an able little freight schooner, the *Biscayne*, to which the Commodore contributed a sail-plan. She was a good exponent of the virtues of the sharpie hull, running to Jacksonville in all weathers for many years, and surviving some tough experiences.

On the occasion in question Fozzard had arranged to take the younger members of the Brickell family to Jacksonville on the first stage of their journey to Chicago, where the Columbian Exposition was in progress. They had nearly reached the St. John's bar, fighting a stiff northeaster, when the gale became a hurricane, the bar was entirely impassable, and they had to run for the nearest shelter — at Cape Florida, over 300 miles away. Unfortunately they approached the Cape at night, in the roaring, spray-swept blackness, and being unable to see any landmark except Fowey Rock light, they ran into its lee, on the end of the reef, and in that dubious partial shelter let go both anchors.

They held, and there the little boat rode out the night, foam-swept and unmercifully buffeted, the reef to windward a boiling sea of phosphorescent breakers, the wind bellowing and screaming overhead. The sea must have been one of the heaviest known, for next morning the Commodore, from his boathouse at Coconut Grove, could see the white flash of breakers on the outer beach at Key Biscayne, *over the trees*, throughout the entire length of the key!





Toward morning the wind hauled quickly through east to south, and daylight found them in the welter of surf which followed the shift. Their hemp cables, well chafed as they must have already been, were dragged over fresh angles of the sharp coral, and the new strains were soon too much for them; they parted, and the *Biscayne* was adrift. The wind now being west of south, the schooner faced a wild scud across the Gulf Stream in the maelstrom of a ferocious cross-sea, onto the unmarked mazes of coral on the Bahama Banks.

There was but one thing to save her — make sail, weather the sand-bores running southeast from Cape Florida, and beach her on the inside of the Cape, where there would be no sea in the lee of the coral banks, though the wind now blew onshore there. They had already close-reefed their three lowers in readiness, now immediately ran them up, and thanked God to see the new canvas hold. The little schooner staggered and leaped, but made good a course to windward of the sand-bores, and her prospects began to look brighter.

The Commodore had been up all night, securing things along the waterfront at Coconut Grove, and followed the *Biscayne's* adventures, from daylight on, through his telescope. As she won her way inside the sand-bores he heaved a sigh of relief, for all seemed well. So she proceeded, the hauling wind now blowing straight out to sea across the really terrific surf on the sand-bores. But about half a mile from the Cape the plucky vessel suffered another blow — her forestaysail let go, vanishing out of its bolt-ropes like a puff of smoke! The Commodore at the glass, six miles away, caught his breath. Would she steer? Could she be kept going long enough to get inside the Cape?

The question was answered immediately by the settling of her main peak — a big risk for her mainsail, but the only thing to do. It was successful, and the little craft swept on into the narrow Mangrove Channel, close to



the Cape, in the shelter of the coral banks, with rejoicing in the hearts of her crew and passengers. What happened next they did not much care, and since they had no ground tackle, there was little choice. The gale whipped them up onto the beach, and the tide being several feet above normal, they rested far back on the sand-ridge, among the coconuts, perfectly safe.

The Commodore of course rejoiced with them, but immediately realized the difficulty and cost of floating the schooner from her present position at normal tide. This storm tide was the backwash from the water driven into the Bay the previous night by the northeast phase of the hurricane, which was now racing out to sea before the southwest phase, and inundating the banks and keys on its way. While this tide held, it would be a simple matter to pull her off, if she had a good anchor, set well to windward — and there, on the Commodore's wharf, lay a 450-lb. kedge, with new hawser!

Could it be taken to her in time? In fact, could it be carried across the Bay at all in that weather? Few would have said yes to the second question, and perhaps none but the Commodore would have even considered the first, but Fozzard was a good friend, and *Wabun* lay close by at her mooring, while Dick Carney was always eager for such work. So there was a hurry call for volunteers among the neighbors, and in short order *Wabun* was brought alongside and close-reefed all round, while the anchor and cable were stowed on deck, with utmost care. An old centerboard was laid across the cockpit with the anchor on it, so that it would go over clear when the board was tilted, the cable was faked out on deck, and a long, strong heaving line, with a buoy, made fast to its end.

Under three-reefed mainsail only the *Wabun* cast off, and swooped across the raging bay, the gale still at its height. They ran through the old government channel, which led straight for the Cape, and at its end headed



nearly for the old Hurricane Harbor — a small natural pocket among the mangroves. This was somewhat inshore of the schooner, and took them across the Mangrove Channel, through which the tide was racing dizzily out to sea. Then, carefully choosing just the right spot, "up-tide" from the schooner, the big anchor was slid overboard, and its cable raced off the *Wabun's* stern as she leaped on toward the shore.

Fozzard and his crew saw what was intended, and quickly forming a chain of men waded out as far as possible. The end of the cable went overboard, the heaving line and its buoy followed, as near the beach as *Wabun* dared go, and then she instantly swerved just enough westward to enter the Hurricane Harbor, where in less than no time she was riding to her own anchors. It was a skillful maneuver, smartly executed, and entirely successful, for the current carried the buoy-line within reach, the cable was quickly led through the *Biscayne's* stern chocks to her windlass, and before the tide had materially dropped she was hauled off her lofty perch and rode to the big kedge, quite uninjured! As may well be imagined, Fozzard gave hearty recognition to what he called "the smartest bit of wrecking the coast ever saw!"





## II

### CAT CAY AND THE CAPE

A GREAT addition to the Coconut Grove circle about this time, and one of the most interesting and delightful members of the growing yacht club, was Arthur S. Haigh. Resident of Huddersfield, England, member of the Royal Thames Yacht Club of which King Edward was Commodore, and a wide traveler, he had come down the Florida coast as far as Palm Beach in "Cap" Dimmick's day. The county road, cleared through to Miami just before work on the railroad was begun, tempted him on to Biscayne Bay, and having a true British love of the sea, he found the young yacht club at Coconut Grove and its enthusiastic cruising members entirely to his taste.

He was immediately struck by the short distance to Nassau, where he had many friends, and loving the tropic wilderness, he determined to settle on some Bahama Island. Not long after this, Cat Cay, on the edge of the Gulf Stream, just south of Gun Cay light, came on the market and Haigh soon owned it. It was a charming spot, some three miles long, beautifully wooded, with a comfortable stone-walled bungalow crowning its high eastern ridge and facing across the great bank into the soft trade wind. Here, beneath the blue ensign of the British Naval Reserve, Haigh established a complete and competent bachelor home, and quickly became the unofficial overlord of the western edge of the bank, with all its inhabitants — most of which were in Bimini, twelve miles north. Cat Cay became, of course, a favorite objective of the Coconut Grove cruisers; it was a delightful trip across the Straits and the Stream, not too long, yet adventurous enough to require some skill and care.



But the greatest charm was Haigh's perfect and abounding hospitality.

Though he loved the wilderness, he was no hermit, and Cat Cay was never complete to him without guests, whose visits were one succession of idyllic days — the absolute perfection of physical delight, with the mental joy of exceptionally good talk on wide-ranging subjects. Haigh was a true cosmopolitan, his year being divided between the remoteness of Cat Cay and the heart of London or Paris, in both of which he had many friends and interests. He had always a good cook and faultless service, and was himself a caterer of great originality and ability, while his cellar was as well stocked as his store-room. I need not say that we all loved to visit Cat Cay.

In 1894 he coasted southward from Cape Cod in *Reine*, a Crosby catboat built for the trip, to take possession of Cat Cay. With him came Dan Lund, always afterward a friend as much as an employee and a frequent visitor to the Cay. *Reine* was soon changed to a cat-yawl, with a small outboard jib, for rough water work, and served her purpose well. Once she was struck by lightning, her mast being splintered and the cabin-sides split all the way around, so that the cabin could be lifted off. She looked a complete wreck, and on the strength of some friend's report, Haigh wrote from Belgium, "Sell her or burn her." The Commodore demurred, however, and succeeded in splicing the mast, resetting the cabin and restoring her to good condition at very moderate cost, a good example of his ingenuity, exercised, at cost of considerable trouble, for a friend.

In 1901 when a larger and abler boat was wanted, the Commodore designed *Carib*, a 50-foot ketch whose lines were later partly used for Mr. Henry Howard's yacht *Alice*, around which discussion has raged since her description and performance were published in "Yachting," 1925-6. The result is a book by Mr. Howard, entitled "The Yacht 'Alice'," which is dedicated





To  
Our Friend  
COMMODORE RALPH MIDDLETON MUNROE  
of  
Coconut Grove, Florida

To whose genius as a designer and long experience on the sea, is due the success of the *Alice*, not only in rough ocean cruising but also in our shallow and peaceful Inland Waterways.

*Carib* was built at Coconut Grove and the greater part of one winter was spent "bossing" two hands on a frame-saw, who cut her timbers out of the old Key Largo mahogany abandoned by the South Florida Lumber Co.<sup>1</sup> The Commodore laid out these frames himself, marking both sides of the planks to indicate bevels, and has always been properly proud of the fact that when the frame was set up and faired, the resulting chips amounted to scarcely a hatful!

*Carib* was a sound, dry, able sea-boat, a little more comfortable for having about a foot more draft than most Coconut Grove boats, since she did not have to lie in that shoal harbor, constantly crossing the bar which had only two feet at extreme low water. The Commodore did not hesitate to match her for ability against anything afloat of her size, while her comfort at sea was unsurpassed, and she handled like a sailboat. Her trial trip was made in a northeast blow which covered Cape Florida bar with breakers, through which she went out, under full sail, close-hauled, as though it were smooth water. But the return trip was even more impressive, with half a gale on the quarter, when, if ever, she should have shown some tendency to take the bit in her teeth. Instead of this, she came in steered by *one hand* which remained throughout on *one spoke* of the wheel! "Easy as an old shoe," was the Commodore's phrase for the performance. Incidentally, on the trip across the Bay, by the wind,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 207.



she outsailed, by eleven miles to eight, a crack sloop which had been waiting to try conclusions with her.

For many years Cat Cay remained a wholly delightful spot. Among guests on *Carib* was Sir Gilbert Carter of Nassau, Governor of the Bahamas, and between him and the Commodore especial arrangements were ultimately made whereby customs regulations were practically abrogated for the club, and the one officer at Bimini, who combined the duties of Collector, Harbor-Master, Port Doctor, Mayor, Chief of Police and a few more, was instructed to make everything as pleasant as possible for the members. It became customary to proceed direct to Cat Cay, and sometime during the visit make an excursion to Bimini, where we would enter and clear at the same time.

Cat Cay had some remarkably delightful features, even as compared with other tropical islands. Lapped by the Gulf Stream, it enjoyed its incredibly brilliant colors, as well as its steady warmth, which gave it a much smaller range of temperature than even Nassau. The records of five years show a total range of twenty-five degrees. It is not strange that we thought of Cat Cay as always basking in one unchanging flood of gratefully tempered warmth.

Without fresh-water springs or swamps, it was entirely free from mosquitoes, an unusual privilege in the tropics. One strange exception must be made; a few times in its history the island had been suddenly clouded with innumerable hordes of mosquitoes which were a nuisance for three days and then disappeared. These visitations were a complete mystery until it was learned that the mosquitoes were identical with those which occasionally swept out from the Florida mainland, over the keys and the Hawk Channel to invade the lighthouses on the Reef, four or five miles offshore! This seemed so incredible that we found it but little more remarkable that the same insects should actually cross the Gulf Stream





THE WHITE, WIND-SWEPT CHURCH ON BIMINI  
Last resting-place of Haigh



OLD TOWER AT CAPE FLORIDA (ABOUT 1891)

On land given to the United States by Mr. Davis in 1827. Note keeper's house nearly intact; it and the coconuts are now washed away and the surf beats on the base of the tower





and settle on Cat Cay, and to this conclusion we were forced.

Cat Cay is unusually fortunate, among the smaller Bahama cays, in having *two* rocky ridges on part of its length, instead of the usual *one*; consequently there is a good accumulation of soil in its heart, which even retains some water, at least during the rainy season. Under Haigh's care this land supported an excellent garden, which added much to the delights of his table. Poultry did well, and the rocky shores of the Cay were abundantly stocked with delicious fish, including the succulent spiny lobster. A pigeon-loft supplied squabs, while the drowsy cooing of the pigeons lingers in mind as fitting music for the restful progress of the day in Haigh Castle.

The island had one lack — that of a land-locked harbor. The anchorage in front of the house was exposed to the east, across the Great Bahama Bank, as far as Andros Island — eighty miles. While this is shallow water, incapable of piling up the rollers of the open sea, it none the less can kick up an uncomfortable bobble in a strong easterly wind, enough to test the riding quality of any small yacht, and the comfort of those on board. It was Dan Lund who finally proposed, planned and partly executed a breakwater, with characteristic ingenuity and energy. There were no lighters available, and it was not feasible to move one from either Miami or Nassau, so Dan had the necessary lumber shipped from Miami on one of the occasional Bimini schooners, and built a barge at Cat Cay. Then, proceeding to a point at the north end of the Cay where the rocky shore made a bluff over the water, he moored the barge below, and knocked off large sections of the bluff with dynamite, so that they fell on the barge. It only remained to tow her to the breakwater and pry the chunks overboard; a few weeks of this started good shelter for a small anchorage, which was left uncompleted by Dan's unfortunate death.

Wrecks, treasure-hunts and visiting yachts were recur-



rent excitements in Cat Cay life, but the visitor to the little island paradise remembers most vividly the sparkling climate, the luxurious comfort of the well-ordered day, the marvelous morning bath on the beach, the amazing sea-gardens, with endless strange and beautiful fish, the delights of perfect food and service, and the delicious lazy monotony of the passing weeks. The sense of remoteness — of utter separation from the normal world of bustle and business — was very striking, and was emphasized rather than diminished by the monthly visit of the mail schooner from Nassau, carrying her accumulation of letters and papers, already many weeks old, with a joint of beef and a few cakes of ice — the only vestige of regular “marketing” in the unique Cat Cay régime!

The end of all this came with Haigh's death, while on his way from Nassau to Bimini to celebrate Christmas with the gifts and feasting that made this annual holiday for the islanders. While napping in the cabin, on a quiet afternoon, his heart stopped — so peacefully that no one knew of it for some time after. Then there was consternation and deep grief in his devoted crew. In sorrow they completed the run to Bimini, and there Haigh's body was laid away in the coral ridge beside the white, wind-swept church, amid the reverent mourning of the whole population.

Closely associated with Haigh and Cat Cay in my mind was Alec Boggs, an under-secretary of Breckenridge, United States Minister to Russia. Diverted from diplomatic work by the threatened failure of his sight, he planted grapefruit at Coconut Grove. By the time it became productive the outdoor life had restored his eyes, and he read law, soon establishing himself as one of the leaders of the bar in Miami. Public-spirited and courageous, he took the lead in many important movements, being one of the first to oppose the all-powerful Flagler régime in certain matters, especially of railroad rates





and administration which discriminated against Miami. He was a born leader and fighter, and would have been one of the big men of Florida had his life not come to an untimely and tragic end in a fire which destroyed his home.

An enthusiastic fisherman and a good sailor, the cruising grounds of Florida gave him ideal holidays. I can never forget his radiant joy in sea and wind and sun, nor his irresponsible glee when good fish were running. He liked the fish as well as the fishing; broiled mutton-fish was always a delight, and fresh Spanish mackerel, noble dishes both, while his first thought on getting afloat was a bucket of boiled crawfish, into which he would reach at intervals during the day, as a boy into a candy-box.

My first cruise on *Wabun* was with Boggs to Cat Cay, where we stayed for a marvelous week. We spent the days in sun and wind, with very little clothing most of the time, and Boggs's handsome body soon became a splendid bronze statue — a creditable model for any of the famous South Sea Island fishermen.

Boggs was a good citizen, a good friend, and an able man, and so long as any who knew him are left on Biscayne Bay he will be sincerely mourned.

In the summer of 1893 Mr. Waters S. Davis of Galveston, with his wife and two charming daughters, came to occupy the Cape Florida tract where his grandfather had laid out a town in 1838. He brought letters of introduction to the Commodore from mutual friends; Galveston suggested to the Commodore the cutter *Harriett Lane*, appointed for nautical training at Eagleswood School, but later destroyed in an attack on Galveston, and he found that Mr. Davis had been active in this engagement against her.

The Commodore took charge of Cape Florida, had the land cleared, a two-story bungalow erected, designed



and had built for Mr. Davis an auxiliary sailing launch named *Fornella* after a former Spanish owner of the Cape property, and began an intimacy with this delightful family which lasted without a break till the death of the elders ended the family life on the Cape, and the property was finally sold to the Deering interests.

This estate had first been acquired by the Davis family in 1824 when Mrs. Mary Ann Davis of St. Augustine bought 175 acres on the point of Key Biscayne, forming Cape Florida, from Raphael Andreu, stepson of Pedro Fornella, to whom the tract had been granted by the English Governor in 1800. Of this Davis family, originally from Rhode Island, one son soon left St. Augustine for Galveston and grew up with that thriving city, leaving his father, Waters S. Davis, Sr., and family to battle with the new territory, which the father did by exploring the eastern coast, finally making a selection at the south end of Cape Florida. In 1827 he deeded some three acres of land on the southeast point to the United States Government for lighthouse purposes, and during that year, the tower and keepers' dwelling were presumably erected. The latter is long since undermined and gone, but until comparatively recent times, the spiral iron staircase in the tower was usable and the old lantern offered visitors a wide outlook over the Bay and the Hawk Channel; it is now too dangerous, and the tower is closed. This tower, now in the edge of the water, was at first in the center of the northerly part of the three-acre rectangular lot, but the encroachment of the sea has left it as it now is.

"Early in my charge of the property," the Commodore relates, "after it was taken over in eighteen-ninety-three by Waters S. Davis, Second, of Galveston, I was asked by him to see what I could do to stop the erosion of the sea before mentioned. This I took hold of at once, and in about three years had not only stopped the destruction, but reclaimed the greater part of an acre. It was found, however, to be a matter of constant expense, or else a



large expenditure in bulk which Mr. Davis did not feel equal to, and the subsequent owners were indifferent about it, so that the great gale of ninety-six almost completely wrecked what had been done."

"To return to Mr. Davis the First," the Commodore adds, with his delightful reminiscent chuckle, "it was during his occupancy of the property that General Harney with a large detachment of United States troops was stationed at Cape Florida, while in prosecution of the Indian wars. This was about the year eighteen-thirty-eight. Harney and Davis conceived the idea of a city on the Cape, had it platted and mapped, and proceeded to sell city lots to a considerable extent. This procedure hardly met with the approbation of Mr. Davis the Second on his advent in eighteen-ninety-three, and he took steps to call in these sales, which by that time were mostly under water; a few were found and cleared up. It always gave me great amusement to stop the bragging of our early real estate sharps in Miami by relating the doings of the real pioneer agents of eighteen-thirty-eight."

"The erosion of the Cape shore line has brought to light much that is of interest — ancient arms and implements, and bar-shot of pirate times; only the other day a complete skeleton in a cypress coffin called me over there for identification if possible. Of course the story of the Indian attack, previously told, is threadbare years ago, but authentic, as are the more recent annual raids of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club on the twenty-second of February. Instead of the lighthouse, however, the object of their attack is a big pot of fish chowder, coffee and cakes, in remembrance of George Washington."

The clearing of the Cape in 1893 and the need of a caretaker for the property afterward, made the first step upward in the life of a young negro, Israel Lafayette Jones, later well-known on the Bay as "Pahson Jones," homesteader, fish-guide and philosopher of Cæsar's Creek. Black, strong and cheery, his ambition had





brought him from the Carolinas to this land of opportunity when there were practically no colored men in Dade County, and after a period as handy man at Peacock Inn, he married Moselle, an equally ambitious girl from Nassau, and they were established as guardians of the cottage on the Cape. Here their two sons were born, and Moselle appealed to Miss Mary Davis for suggestions of great men to name them for. Miss Davis could think of no more admirable heroes than King Arthur and Sir Launcelot, and so they were named. To Moselle the title was an integral part of the name, and they were always addressed by both together; I can still hear her musical hail from the doorway: "Oh you, King Arthur! Come to dinnah!" Jones roughed out most of the bush in preparing for the new house and grounds, and killed eight or ten rattlesnakes in the process, one of which was nine feet long.



### III

#### MARRIAGE

THE light shoal *Wabun* was so successful, and so much handier than her larger predecessors, that in 1894 the Commodore planned a still smaller boat, *Utilis*, 33 feet overall, arranged for day work and short cruises. *Wabun's* extra beam had given her the desired speed to windward, but it had made her just a little too stiff for greatest comfort in rough water; besides this, a new era was coming in — that of auxiliary power — and *Utilis* was designed for an engine, with a beam of nine feet, just one-third of her water-line length. As a matter of fact, however, the engine selected worked so imperfectly that it was condemned on trial and taken out; *Utilis* went south under sail alone, and it was twelve years before power was finally installed in her.

The defects of the gas engine of that day were further exemplified in the sloop *Jupiter*, on which a large one-cylinder affair had been mounted while *Utilis* was building. Its trial was memorable, with tremendous noise, and such violent vibration of the whole boat that her long topmast was whipped into double reverse curves, and it seemed as though the spars must be shaken out of her! It was serviceable, however, for the two were in company part of the way southward that fall, and *Jupiter* exchanged towing service in the canals for pilotage elsewhere by the Commodore.

With her nine feet beam, eighteen inch draft and moderate ballast, *Utilis* was tender, and sailed at a considerable angle, but once down on her sailing lines she became extremely stiff, largely from judicious freeboard and flare. She was noted for a mysterious ability to "drag" whole sail and keep on going to windward with it, even in





half a gale. This was something which no naval architect would have predicted from her lines; in fact, it could probably have been proven, *a priori*, that she couldn't do it — but she did.

She was very easily handled, her rig being a cross between schooner and sharpie, with two sails nearly the same size, and a very small jib to give her balance to windward — more like the old Block Island boats than any other recognized rig. All canvas was within reach from deck, and was controlled by the least and lightest of gear. Intended for day parties on smooth water, with seagoing ability, when called on, *Utilis* proved to be one of the most comfortable boats imaginable in rough water. She remained the Commodore's only boat for twelve years (longer than any previous one) and he came to trust her anywhere, in spite of her "summer cabin." For ventilation, the top of her low trunk cabin was supported only by stanchions, the sides and front of it being closed against weather by heavy canvas curtains, laced down. It was thought they would be strong enough to keep out any water which might come on deck, but in all her life, including many trips across the Gulf Stream, they were never tested by anything heavier than spray.

In the confused short chop of the edge of the Stream, broken by eddies into an extremely trying, irregular form — or formlessness — she was very easy on herself and on her crew, and there is no more searching test. She was remarkably dry for so small a boat, and her weatherliness made her a most satisfactory cruiser. She had a long cockpit, comfortable for a good-sized sailing party, and from it her cabin ran well forward, holding four transom berths, so that it was unusually capacious for her length, and as her ability was proven, she went on more and longer cruises, each of which the more endeared her to her owner and her passengers; she was a complete success. A description of her and an account of one of her cruises to Cat Cay were printed in "Rudder"



in 1898, and my own introduction to Cat Cay was in the following year when five of us crossed the Stream in her and spent a week or so in that paradise.

"On our return trip," writes the Commodore, in his own account, "we had leisurely breakfasted and were ready for a start about 6:30 A.M., wind fresh E.N.E. with the fleecy trade wind clouds racing across the sky. Earlier the sun had set up its backstays, so there was no fear of lack of wind. Clear of Gun Cay Cut we winged her out and laid our course for Fowey Rocks, forty-one miles across the Stream. Soon off soundings, with the following sea beginning to cap, thoughts of a reef in the mainsail entered the skipper's mind, for if this wind increased as it most likely would, it was going to be blamed troubled water as we drove to leeward; and our draft was only eighteen inches, mind you that. But we had crew enough to eat her, so who cared, and on she went, steering like a bird. Soon the sails began losing the wind as *Utilis* dropped into the deepening troughs. Well, let her, everything is light but strong and the heads will keep her booms out.

"Someone took a bearing of the sun and out came watches. Say what's that dead ahead? By heck, it's Fowey, close aboard; let her go west nor'west and jibe the main sail. My, how she jumped as the jib filled, and soon the breakers on the Cape sand bores, with the old tower, came in plain sight, lifting above the horizon. 'Boys,' said the skipper, 'we've made a record run across for a sailboat. What's the time?' 'Eleven-thirty — a five hour run.' It was, luckily for us, strong flood as we rushed the bar and in a few minutes were inside headed for the Grove.

"'But what in thunder is the S. S. *City of Miami* doing in here anchored?' 'Can't tell you, except that they are trying to build up a Nassau excursion trade and today there's a little bit too much sea on, is all I can think of,' remarks the skipper. 'Shucks,' says Captain Dick, 'Didn't we carry full sail right across, and nary a jibe?'



"Charley Stowe, son of Harriet Beecher Stowe, was a member of this party to Cat Cay."

In the spring of 1894 the Commodore had a memorable trip north on *Flying Cloud*, a ketch designed by Cheeseboro & Waterhouse, and built the previous year for Mr. Stephen Moore of Coconut Grove. She was 68' 6" overall, with 3' 10" draft, extremely fast to windward, but very unmanageable running; she could carry no after sail off the wind, and would not steer at all if driven hard. She had one of the then customary thin centerboards, and a very deep one, 7½ feet or so, and entered the Bay on her trip south in distress, the board having been bent short over in the stream. Mr. Moore appealed to the Commodore, who straightened the board, and later she went to Key West, where repairs and alterations were made to her rudder in the effort to make her steer better, with but little success.

During the winter the Commodore sailed her in a memorable race, off Cape Florida, with Mr. MacGregor's *Whim*, a Carey Smith boat from the West Coast. It was blowing fresh northeast, and the windward-and-leeward course took both boats well off into the Stream, where there was a very lively sea. *Flying Cloud* far outsailed her opponent on the windward leg, and *Whim*, apparently badly beaten, and getting an unmerciful hammering from the sea, up stick and ran for the Cape, giving up the race. When *Flying Cloud* turned for the run back home, however, she had to strike half her canvas before she could be kept under control at all, and came home at such an indifferent pace that *Whim* might well have overtaken her had she stuck to the job. It was so rough that the judges' boat had been forced into shelter, and they were timed from the old tower on the Cape.

One of Mr. Moore's guests on *Flying Cloud*, anticipating a pleasant sailing party, came aboard in gala dress as though to a dinner. The *Flying Cloud* had a full flush deck, over which he was unmercifully buffeted about by





wind and water and the hustling crew. The skipper, Carlet, an old Gloucester fisherman, was a two-fisted salt with small consideration for ornamental passengers, during a race, and he had more than one collision with the guest, to the latter's discomfiture. Altogether he had a poor day, half-drowned, blown and knocked about, staggering and clinging on the wildly leaping deck, and finally, on arrival at Coconut Grove, knocked clean overboard by the boom.

On account of this and similar experiences, Carlet had plenty to say about the boat. Mr. Moore decided to part with her, and asked the Commodore to take her North in the spring and try to beat *Micco's* record run of two years before, so as to make a good sale. He was attracted by the fun, and consented, being given full command. Lacking a chronometer, the Commodore rated Mr. Moore's watch by sights taken during several weeks, at the boathouse and the Cape, and in May they were off.

The Commodore's notes of this exciting trip are as follows:

Sailed from Cape Florida 6 P.M., May 14, 1894, under my command with a crew of four. After crossing the bar found a heavy head sea. Just able to lay our course under full sail. By midnight, wind increasing, tucked in two reefs in mainsail. At daylight, wind moderated and hauled slightly; shook out reefs and at noon were in Lat. 28.32, Lon. 79.02 or 169 miles in 18 hours. Light, fair winds prevailed until noon of the 16th when observation showed a gain of only 123 miles. Flat calm till after dark when a light air came in S.S.W., freshening towards midnight. Until noon of the 18th, moderate and variable fair winds. Good sights gave Lat. 34.18 and Lon. 75.53. Distance made good, 180. At 3 P.M. hauled up for Hatteras, strong breeze southwest, passing through the Rips at 6 P.M., but not dark enough to make out the light. Passed two lumber schooners on same course, thus verifying reckoning. Weather looking dirty, set main trysail before dark. Vessel not steering well. About daylight, shifted to full mainsail again but wind freshening, had difficulty in steering, so took in mizzen at noon. Just did get a meridian sight which put us in Lat. 36.45. Towards dark, wind still freshening, with squalls, and backing to S.E. with falling glass, took in mainsail, mizzen and jib, and again set main trysail.



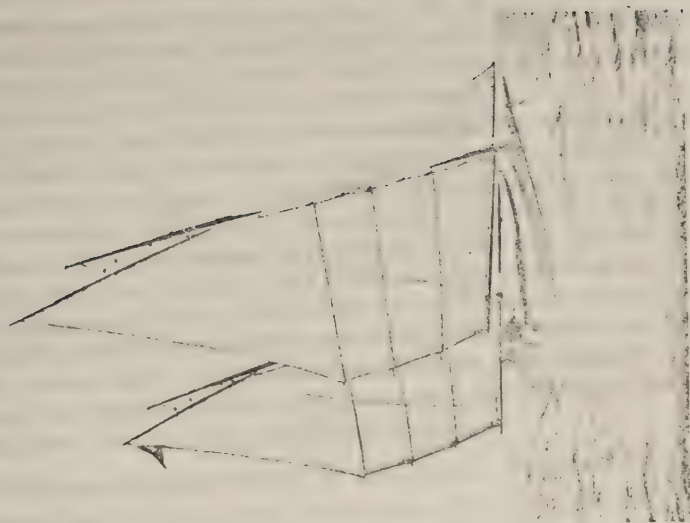
Judging from our noon sight that our position by this time should be abreast of Cape Henry and approximately 20 miles off shore, with every prospect of a gale and very possible backing winds, altered our course to N.E. At midnight, moderate gale S.E. by E. At 4 A.M. thought we passed N.E. End Lightship, a mile or more to port, but this was doubtful as it was then blowing hard with rain squalls and increasing sea. May 20th at daylight passed a Delaware pilot boat No. 3 under close reefs, and shortly afterwards a North German Lloyd steamship with every other sea making a clean breach over her stacks. At eight bells a difference of opinion arose as to our position, the owner and Captain Carlet contending that we were well to the eastward of the course to Sandy Hook. This I doubted and wished still to keep to N.E. course a couple of hours longer. However, feeling that if the wind held at E.S.E. we could with safety run off some, I agreed to halve our differences, so kept her off to N., but with all hands on the alert for shoal water or land, our hand lead being of little use with such a sea running. After about an hour on this new course, while Carlet was up on the gaff of the stowed mainsail attending to some chafing gear, he suddenly jumped to the deck and ran aft, singing out that Absecon lighthouse was dead ahead. While I hove the wheel down, Carlet off stops and up with the mizzen, the rest of the crew trimming sheets and giving her some board. Just then we passed close aboard Brigantine South End buoy. The breakers on Brigantine shoals ran far seaward to the north of us. Would she stay, and go to windward later? Giving her a good full with serious apprehensions of a sea boarding us and bursting the sails, I rolled the wheel down, round she came like a top, and off shore on the port tack she went. Nothing happened.

"Well," said Mr. Moore, "what next?" Carlet relieved me of the wheel and I shoved the companion slide forward a bit, and say — out from the depths came a most delicious odor of coffee and bacon, and my eyes feasted on a pile of sandwiches stacked on the cabin floor, with Mrs. Moore and her sister ready to serve it out. To some of my readers all this may seem as it should be; — why not? — crew up all night, hungry; — feed them, of course. Ah yes, but others of my readers would have far different thoughts after a look down that companionway; thankfulness for their present safety and highest regard for the fortitude of two brave women who had gotten that repast together midst the turmoil of the wild pitching and rolling of a small craft in a gale at sea with closed cabin and ports.

Soon on the outside of this provender, came the question again of what next? If we had known which way that wind was going to cant later on, we probably would have kept on for Sandy Hook, for it did finally haul southerly and we might have made the record run

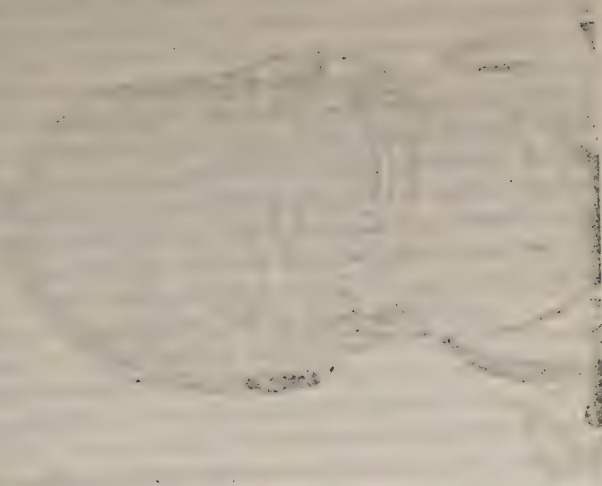






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"PAHSON JONES"  
Of Caesar's Creek



after all, having expended but five days 15 hours to Absecon. However, it blew 72 miles per hour at Sandy Hook the following night and it is well we didn't try it.

As it was, there was no "perfect day" about the run back to Delaware breakwater. Off Hereford Inlet, the wind increased so that the owner almost begged to have the trysail reefed. This I refused to do, knowing that the moment we started to lower it it would go out of the bolt rope in a flash. This was proven later on when we rounded up at the Breakwater, for the whole clew let go at the first slat, and it was a brand new sail. We had a short period of perplexity when approaching the Over-falls shoals at the entrance to the Delaware, owing to all landmarks and buoys being obliterated by the rain and spindrift of the increasing gale, but on the timely appearance of an inward bound steamer from whose higher elevation visibility was much increased, we followed her in until we made out the Breakwater day marks. Both anchors and all our chains held. After midnight the wind shifted to S.W. and all hands turned in.

Next morning, the Breakwater folks reported being swept by the sea, with a wind velocity of over 73 miles. Got Washington time at noon which vindicated our own chronometer watch of error within a few seconds. Seeing wagon loads of strawberries unloading at Lewes pier, we sent our Key Wester with a two dollar bill to bring back what it would buy. He was soon seen carefully rowing back with his feet on the gunwale of the loaded dinghy. He remarked in coming alongside "Say, folks, why do you go to Florida to get fruit?" but he didn't at the time know that those berries were sanded by the storm and nearly worthless in the market. Careful washing almost remedied that objection, and a little grit proved healthful.

The steamer which guided us in proved to be the old *Desoug* which twenty years before had brought "Cleopatra's Needle" in Central Park from Egypt to New York. At the marine railway next to Townsend's wharf in Clifton, Staten Island, the huge monolith was transferred from the steamer to two large lighters — a difficult and delicate task. Every phase of this I had watched with keen interest, being then at work in my father's factory on Townsend's wharf, and I was also present at the nightly meetings of those interested, in Billy Jacobs' drug store, which included Wheeler, the engineer who planned the handling of the great stone, and Commander Goringe of the Navy, who brought the *Desoug* across.

*Utilis'* southward voyage in the fall of 1894 with Walter Browne and Dan Lund for crew, was one of unusual interest. In company with her the Bentons made their second southern cruise on the *Susie B*; this time Mrs.



Benton had as guest her younger sister, Miss Jessie Wirth, and the two boats are said to have kept very close company during the trip.

The chief event was a severe gale at Beaufort. In the height of the blow a large schooner dragged her anchor directly toward the little boat, which was saved by running a line to her cable as far forward as possible; at the critical moment, as the schooner swept down upon them, *Utilis* was veered clear of her by judicious use of this line. The schooner went by safely, and then fetched up, and when all hands got under way after the blow, her anchor was found to be fouled in *Utilis'* chain, which was all that saved her from going ashore. A little later at Southport there was interesting evidence of the floods accompanying this gale in a good-sized frame house which had been carried bodily down the river, almost intact, and rested on the beach at Southport with its brick chimney standing in perfect condition.

The party ran into another severe gale off Cape Ro-main, where they spent a most uncomfortable night at anchor, and next day they entered Bull's Bay, determined for once to try the shallow and tortuous tidal creeks from there to Charleston. They got through, but it is not on record that the Commodore ever used that route again!

From Charleston to the St. John's the inside route was good, and the run thence to Mosquito Inlet a short one. At the haulover canal from Mosquito Lagoon to Indian River (then recently enlarged) they landed for an interesting visit to Hall's Grove and after a pleasant stay at Sewall's Point, sailed from Gilbert's Bar on Christmas eve and entered Bear's Cut the next morning.

This voyage laid the foundations for the next great change in the Commodore's life, through his growing interest in the *Susie's* guest. The winter was a full and pleasant one, as we may imagine, with new interests growing, and the newcomer to guide into a lasting liking for the Bay. Mr. Benton even considered making the Bay





his permanent home, and built a dredge during the winter. In the spring the *Susie B* lingered on at Coconut Grove, and in July there was a wedding which inaugurated a long and happy home life in the Barnacle.

The next five years were active and interesting ones for Barnacle and *Utilis*. Mrs. Munroe took kindly to the water and became an excellent sailor; all the nooks and corners of the Bay and the keys were to be explored afresh for her benefit; all the beauties and curiosities of the coral banks and the great reef were to be exploited, and the days were full and happy. The year 1900 marked a new epoch with the birth of Patty, followed two years later by her brother Wirth. Cruises now were not so frequent, and the routine of both Barnacle and boathouses was subject to many welcome interruptions. One may easily imagine how surely the children's interest was directed to the water, how readily they took to it, and how happy the Commodore was to see the development of two new boat-lovers. A gratifying climax came in 1928 when the Commodore and Wirth were together elected members of the "Cruising Club of America."

As these changes were quietly coming into the Commodore's life, Flagler's railroad had extended its lines from Palm Beach to the Miami River, bringing to the southeast coast of Florida a transformation the nature and magnitude of which were not remotely suspected by anyone in the region.



## IV

### THE NEW ERA AND THE SPANISH WAR

ABOUT 1890 there had been what was then called a "boom" on Biscayne Bay — which in the light of 1925 can scarcely be called more than a flurry. This was due primarily to the development of Lake Worth as a winter resort under the stimulus of the newly established Indian River steamboat service, and the simultaneous great expansion in pineapple raising. Homestead lands on Indian River and Lake Worth were exhausted, and those who wanted free land traveled on to New River or Biscayne Bay, while many of the Lake Worth settlers, having taken a good profit from the Lake developments, hastened to make entry on open lands farther south.

Lemon City became the center of a good deal of this, the Miami River being in a sense closed to settlement by the now thoroughly aroused ambitions of Mrs. Tuttle, who had taken over the Georgia Land Co's interests, on the north, and Mr. Brickell, on the south. In fact both of them, especially the latter, came in for some local abuse for discouraging settlement by the prices set on their lands, which were so far beyond the general ideas of possibility as to seem absurd. It was about this time that Mr. Brickell began to ask \$1,000 an acre for some land, and \$1,000 had recently been a big price for a 160-acre homestead! And it was in the fall of 1891 that Mrs. Tuttle established herself in a very comfortable Miami home to watch and encourage developments. She arrived with a schooner-load of property, including a number of Jersey cows, the first herd in Dade County, which roused much interest.

There was plenty of land above and below the river, however, and the settlers came in so fast that they soon





outnumbered the "old-timers," and there was a lumber-charter for every boat that wanted it. In July of 1891 Fort Lauderdale post office was established and about a year later Guy Metcalf, the enterprising editor of the "Tropical Sun" on Lake Worth, headed a company to operate a mule-stage line between Lantana on Lake Worth and Lemon City at the head of the Bay. The distance was 66 miles, over a newly opened county road — and a mighty rough road it was. The speed was three miles an hour and the journey took two days, the night being spent at Stranahan's Camp at New River. The fare was \$10.

It is sufficiently significant of the difficulties of coast travel previous to this that the "hack-line," as it was called, was considered a great improvement, and carried many newcomers to the Bay, besides being warmly welcomed by those who had to make the trip on county business.

In 1892 there was a little talk about building a railroad down the east coast, but it was of the same vague and visionary type as Brickell's prophecy of 1877, and no one really expected anything of the kind; at the same time the air was full of plans for steamer lines from Jacksonville, from Key West, from railhead at Titusville, and so forth. That same year Flagler actually visited Lake Worth, fell in love with it and bought land for a new hotel. The railroad visions suddenly became real and imminent, and the next summer the rails grew from St. Augustine to Lake Worth so rapidly that the residents could only gasp and rub their eyes.

About this time, Mr. J. E. Ingraham, Flagler's advisory land-man, having made a pretty complete topographical reconnaissance of the Everglades and the adjacent coast line, concluded with the Biscayne Bay landholders, including Mrs. Tuttle, a deal which the Commodore and some friends had attempted, but backed out of, by reason of defective titles. Mrs. Tuttle had been dickering with



Flagler in hopes of coming to terms, but there was a hitch somewhere. She went down to see the Commodore to find what he could offer in advice, and he tells the story in his own words: "Ingraham had evidently been honest in his statements to his employer, and favored the purchase of the Tuttle tract and the building of a terminus at the river mouth, but it leaked out that he was dubious as to the real frost line after the experience of the past few years further up along the line. This I thought was an explanation, or a partial one, of Flagler's hesitancy and so told Mrs. Tuttle. My advice was as follows: 'Go to Flagler in person. Take with you all the evidence possible as to the country not having had any destructive freeze in *very* many years. I can furnish you copies of my photographs and substantiate the time of making the exposures and the location. Catch him after a good dinner and give him one of your attractive talks; the pictures will do the rest.' She came back from her visit with Flagler's promise to come down and see for himself.

"Shortly after, he did come, sending one of his river steamers down in advance outside to meet him at Little River inside the Bay whence he had preceded her via the palmetto stage route down from Lake Worth. Stopping a few minutes on the trip down the Bay to announce his arrival to Mrs. Tuttle at Miami, the party kept on five miles further to Coconut Grove, landing at the Biscayne Bay Manufacturing Co's canning factory pier and proceeding to the Peacock Inn. There the party was served with a dinner for which the inn had already become famous (though, as the only house of entertainment south of Lake Worth it was not subject to competition). After dinner Mr. Flagler and his party wandered round the Grove, being much struck with my royal palms, bamboos and tropical vegetation, such as he had never seen before in the United States. He particularly inquired about the royal palms, mentioned that he contemplated building a large hotel to be called the Royal Palm at





Miami, and would I consider selling him these specimens to be transplanted? I imagine that a pretty big price could have been gotten for them but I turned down his suggestion and he afterwards secured others from the Cape Sable district, though the expense was enormous and only one or two of them survived, for long, the process of removal.

"The Flagler party returned to Miami in the afternoon, and subsequent proceedings are simply matters of history. Coconut Grove, however, nearly flew off the handle, and I became the object of some little censure, because I expressed a hope that he would settle upon Miami as the site of his city and leave us entirely alone."

Flagler finally took Mrs. Tuttle's land for the new city, accepting alternate blocks in return for the clearing of her somewhat complicated title and the increased value of the remainder. The early growth of the town was not what Mrs. Tuttle expected. In fact, in the first years it was largely a fiat development, in which Flagler continued to build ahead of actual demand, to stimulate interest and get things started. The result was bitter disappointment for Mrs. Tuttle, whose land remained vacant, weed-grown and in little demand until her death. In later years, of course, it became immensely valuable to her heirs.

In dredging the river-mouth for its steamers, the new administration left a crescent-shaped pile of broken shell and marl thirty feet high on Brickell's Point, neatly encircling his house and cutting off all view of the river and bay! Brickell insisted that this was to have been distributed to fill in some low land — but there it lay until he found a means of getting something back by selling it for road-making material. Though he lived to see his lands of far greater value than he had ever hoped for, he, too, died before their development into the best part of Miami, and the growth of prices which even he could scarcely have believed.





So the railroad came to Miami, a mere bitterness to the two most directly interested. Where were now the pleasant friendships of the early days? What now signified the quiet, wild beauty of the Miami River? Neither was "profitable" and both vanished like smoke. That was the turning point, from quiescence to progress, from waiting to doing, from enjoying to making, from the old times to the new — and I have never quite made up my mind whether I am glad or sorry for the change!

"I do not wish to sound disgruntled or pessimistic," says the Commodore. "I know there are many advantages in the new life which has flowed in so irresistibly since the railroad came to the Bay, and I suppose that we who loved the old days would not actually turn back the clock even if we could. But let no one think that this great change did not bring disadvantages as well. The charm of wide spaces and the simple life are gone, and they are blessings not to be despised, and very difficult to replace. If life on the Bay is now more comfortable, food more varied, society that of the traveling world, and neighbors those progressive thousands who have learned the comforts and benefits of winter warmth within the last generation, we should be thankful, and we are; but we may, perhaps, be forgiven for turning an occasional wistful eye back to the times of exploration, or outward in quest of further empty spaces and lonely refuges."

To boat-lovers the early effects of the railroad on the Bay were, to say the least, deplorable. The dredge-cuts which brought a ten-foot channel into the river were a help to the steamers, but to nothing else, for the spoil-banks were allowed to lie beside the cuts, coming up to the surface, and reducing the navigable water in the upper bay to the cuts themselves, for the most part. For years, in sailing to Miami, we had but one or two narrow breaks in these dredge-banks whereby we could enter the river-channel — and of course the channel itself could



not be sailed to windward except in a very small boat, and then with much labor.

For the convenience of the steamer pilots these cuts were marked with a plentiful sprinkling of heavy piles — almost a row of telegraph-poles, which were unlighted, and a constant menace to boats, sail or power, at night. Those actually on the higher dredge-banks were comparatively harmless, except to very small craft, but farther down, where the piling was continued in deeper water to indicate the course, they were a grave danger to everything moving on the bay, and many a yacht lost sails or spars and was badly battered or even sunk in collision with these illegal obstructions. The line of the river channel cut across the upper half of the time-honored yacht club race course, and forced its abandonment. An even graver threat followed when this piling, after a few years, commenced to rot off at the surface of the water. This left a sharp-pointed stub, just out of sight, ready to rip the bottom out of any boat that struck it, and many did so in the next years. In fact, this peril still menaces the unwary.

In the first talk of railroad and resort business on the Bay the Commodore urged on Mr. Flagler the claims of Key Biscayne as an ideal hotel site, commanding both sea and bay, near to the fishing-grounds and the great reef, and comfortably isolated from any intrusive features of the country's development, while still commanding ample space for all the adjuncts and accompaniments necessary for the amusements of guests. The railroad would have had to bridge the Bay, however; the attempt to operate the Royal Poinciana at Palm Beach through ferry connection, in its first year, was a total failure. There were, of course, further considerations as to freight traffic and harbor facilities which added their weight for Miami, and very likely Mr. Flagler already had Key West in his mind. Key Biscayne, north of Mr. Davis's Cape home, was then the property of Mr. Os-





born's heirs, and went finally to Mr. Matheson, whose use of it in experimental plantations has doubtless been for the greater good of the Bay as a whole.

Be that as it may, the Royal Palm at Miami never took precedence of Palm Beach as a resort, nor even approached its popularity; as, indeed, why should it? Surrounded by the rather sordid growing town, many miles from the sea-beach and from the best of the fishing, it was used primarily as a comfortable transition point from train to boat, in which some of the quieter winter visitors, content with climate, comfort and beautiful grounds, lingered for the season.

As always in such epochal changes, those on the spot were more absorbed by the passing details than properly aware of the basic change of life and habit, which daily events served rather to conceal. The mails now came through Jacksonville instead of Key West. A comfortable steamer made regular runs to the latter, connecting there with other boats for Havana and Tampa. Another ran to Nassau where a considerable American tourist business soon grew up. The old "Fowey Rock News Packet Line" continued its weekly trips for a time, and often delivered the New York papers at the Grove nearly, if not quite, as fresh as those that came by rail, but its importance was over, and it was not long before it fell into disuse — and those pleasant visits to the lighthouse and the passing steamers ceased.

The final stage in the transition from the Florida of Brickell and Peacock, of coontie and green turtle, to the "American Riviera" of motor-boat racing and sail-fishing, was the extension of the railroad to Key West, stringing the long sweep of the Keys on the double steel rails and spanning the intervening waters with embankments or viaducts. When suggested, this work was considered absurdly visionary. Where was the business to justify 150 miles of construction far more expensive than that of any existing railroad? But Flagler had the unfading



and compelling vision, and the miracle-road went through.

The work began in 1905, with a great fleet of dredges opening up the channels inside the Keys for the transportation of materials and machinery by river steamer. The impenetrable tangle of mangrove between the mainland and Key Largo — ten miles of it — was conquered by the huge dredges, which simply undermined the forest beside the track, and buried the remaining trees to make the "grade." Beds of fine marl were searched out (white silt which hardens almost like mortar on exposure to the air) and millions of tons of it grew into countless miles of thirty-foot embankment across the shoals. Trestles, or in the more exposed parts, concrete arches of fifty-foot span, bridged the deeper waters.

In October, 1906, came the first set-back, a hurricane which drove several feet of extra tide into Florida Bay, melted away the marl-banks like sugar, destroyed many trestles, smashed a steamer and several huge "quarter-boats" (floating tenements in which laborers were housed), and generally played the deuce. But the work went on, with just a little heavier and solider construction. Soon trains ran to Knight's Key, halfway to Key West, and connected there with the Havana steamers. And in the fullness of time, the locomotive entered the ancient "Island City," where enormous car-ferries were ready, Cuban tracks were quickly covered with American cars, and the road had more freight than it could handle.

All this was thrilling from the industrial standpoint, and it provided the Florida East Coast Railway with a fine advertising nickname — "The Sea-going Railroad" — but to those especially interested in the unique cruising-ground of the Reef and the Keys, it was nothing less than a calamity. Not only was the beauty of the islands broken, and their age-long loneliness destroyed by the blast of the steam whistle and the rumble of endless



wheels, but *almost every inlet was closed!* There were about thirty altogether, of which at least a dozen were in constant use by freight-schooners, spongers and fishermen, as well as yachts, and in many cases these inlets gave access to the only adequate shelter for local craft. These vessels were moored outside the Keys, in the open Hawk Channel, until hurricane signs appeared, and were then taken inside into some secluded pocket and tied up to the mangroves. And for all these inlets the railroad provided *two drawbridges*. I need say no more.

One development in connection with the railroad which came close to Com. Munroe was the establishment of Long Key Fishing Camp, under the coconuts planted long ago by the Hines, with the help of the sharpie *Pelican*. Little did those eager explorers and workers of the '80's, beautifying a tiny island far from the mainland and many days' sail from the nearest railroad, think that some of the trees they planted would be felled before maturity to make way for the iron horse.

After a time the old residents began to realize that the happily independent life which they had so long cherished was permanently interwoven with the bustle and hustle of the steam-driven world. They began to resent freight-rates, which were terrific, partly because of special privileges granted this pioneer railroad into an unproductive country, partly from unwarranted extensions of these privileges. They found the pleasant solidarity of the old Bay community broken by the influx of settlers and speculators, the former too many to absorb, the latter always and increasingly objectionable. The old days were done, and the new had arrived, in more ways than one. As we now look back on the dubious bewilderment with which the old-timers tried to adapt themselves to these startling changes in the world which had been so happy for twenty years, we may be pardoned for a somewhat twisted smile at the numerous narratives of "pioneers" who came to Miami on the railroad. Yet they, too, were pioneers of their





epoch — the age of steam; and it is well to remember that the true pioneers of the Bay, the first actual American settlers and home-makers, came before the Civil War.

One of the minor annoyances of the new era was the chain of troubles attending the establishment of standard time, and the resulting arguments and negotiations. The entire peninsula of Florida lay well within the longitudes assigned to Eastern Standard time, but since several systems of railroads met at Savannah, it suited them to change time there, and the line of division between Eastern and Central time was run southeastward to that city. This threw the whole of Florida into the Central time zone, and standard clocks at Miami were forty minutes behind the sun time, which had been in use on the Bay until the railroad came.

This put the day's schedule far too late to suit the activities of the community at Coconut Grove, which at once made earnest and persistent plea for the use of Eastern time on the Bay. Most winter visitors came from the Atlantic Coast, with Eastern time in their pockets, and were encouraged not to change their watches, while the clocks in most of the homes, as well as in the yacht club and Camp Biscayne, were similarly regulated. This made easy a rational use of the outdoor day, but of course conflicted with the railroad and other official hours, and led to the manifold confusions and cross-purposes involved in any double standard.

No satisfactory solution of these troubles was ever discovered. For twenty years the question remained more or less on the carpet, and a great part of Coconut Grove continued to work an hour ahead of the trains. The end came in a curious way, just before the Great War, when the time zones were changed. The old lines had run through large cities, preferably railroad division centers, which resulted in having two standards in use in all principal towns, with much attendant confusion. To avoid this all zones were extended westward away from the



cities, and the boundary between Eastern and Central, instead of running into the Atlantic at Savannah, now runs into the Gulf of Mexico, leaving the whole peninsula in the Eastern belt.

This was all very well so far, but it happened that daylight-saving time was adopted at the same time, and stepped the Miami schedule another hour ahead, so that what had been known as six o'clock was now called eight, and the work of the day began and ended *two* hours earlier than it had! This was a somewhat overwhelming success for the long agitation against Central time, but even so the new arrangement was more wholesome than the old. Fortunately daylight-saving time did not continue after the war, and southern Florida is now comfortably and appropriately established in the Eastern time belt.

The first great excitement in the young town of Miami was the Spanish War. There had been wild tales and rumors about filibustering for some years previous, but most of us discounted these stories, and only long afterward realized, from such accounts as Crane's "Open Boat," and recently Ralph Paine's delightful reminiscences, what a desperate business some of it was.

On the threat of war the correspondents swarmed. One was Thomas Dawley, the Commodore's former "crew" on the trip south with *Kingfish*. One woman took a small open boat to the Bahamas and thence to Cuba, landed, had wild adventures, and returned in safety.

It was perfectly evident that Miami and the Bay were in no danger, even if war should be declared. No warships could get within range of the town and there was no conceivable object in attacking this undeveloped and largely waste region. Nevertheless, there was plenty of foolish excitement, not to say panic.

There were at this time no regular Pilot Commissioners for the new port of Miami, but a self-constituted Board of Pilots, of which Captain Bravo was one, had





assumed control. Bravo was of the Minorcan stock from Trumbull's old New Smyrna colony, and an extremely picturesque figure. For many years he had been a skipper on the Indian River steamers, very popular with the passengers for his geniality and his endless amazing yarns — a close second to Brickell's! When the railroad went through he transferred his allegiance to Flagler, commanded the old side-wheeler *City of Key West* while she ran between Key West and Miami, and was afterward active in the water-transportation end of the key-railroad construction. He was an autocrat by nature and training, and did not propose to see Miami lose any pilotage to Coconut Grove, where the Commodore and Dick Carney were better qualified than anyone else, since they lived nearer the Cape entrance and had done most of the piloting. With the aid of the Commodore's glass they could often see approaching ships in time to meet them, in *Utilis*, before they had even signaled for a pilot.

When war threatened, strict injunctions were sent out from Bravo's pseudo "Board of Pilots" not to bring any ships into the Bay, but they were absolutely without authority, and Dick brought many vessels in, in spite of their protests. That spring the Davises stayed late on Cape Florida, and for some time the Munroes lived with them there, thus being right on the spot.

One day under these conditions a small steamer appeared, some miles out, flying a flag which could not be deciphered . . . "Spanish!" was the cry at once, but that was absurd, since no Spanish ship would enter thus, and Dick and the Commodore sailed for her at once. Still her flag could not be seen clearly, and, absurd or not, Dick began to get a little uneasy, seeing which the Commodore could not resist a bit of teasing.

"Golly, Dick! She *may* be a Spaniard, after all! What do you think?"

"Don't know, Commodore, maybe we'd better not board her."



"Too late, Dicky, she's got us under her guns now, and we might just as well see it through," and Dick's feelings were somewhat mixed as they approached, only to be greeted by a cheery little Dutch skipper from Para, under charter to call at Miami. Dick took her in, making \$150, whereupon the Miami Health Officer put her in quarantine for two weeks, in spite of the fact that she had been at sea longer than the incubation period of yellow fever. This disease was then the subject of frequent panic and quarantine, since there had been many severe epidemics — strange to think of now, when yellow fever is so completely understood and controlled that we have almost forgotten its existence!

Dick rather enjoyed his enforced stay on board, but was then threatened with arrest for boarding a ship before she passed quarantine. The Commodore had this out with Bravo, averting the arrest, but offending Bravo almost to blows! The Board took it out on the poor little skipper, who was fined for some alleged infraction of regulations, and eventually broke his charter and left the Bay.

About this time the "earthworks" were thrown up at the Bluff Rocks, a mile or two below the town, to "defend the city" — a large square mound, behind which there were supposed to be guns.

When Cervera's fleet was reported headed north, Miami excitement rose to fever heat, and the authorities wired frantically for coast defense guns for the "fort." There were very few pieces available, naturally, but some of them were started to Miami, given absolute right of way, and the whole railroad tied up to let them pass through. Before they were mounted, rumor headed the Spanish fleet for Appalachicola, once more the track was cleared, and the poor old guns whizzed north again, amid wild howls of despair from the city. They stayed thus on the road for some time, back and forth, and since they were not needed on the one hand, and useless on



the other, wherever they went, the whole thing was little short of silly. Meanwhile everybody in Miami was hastily packing up to leave, and the Munroes and Davises stayed on at Cape Florida, having a lovely time!

Then troops came, camped on the Royal Palm grounds, and as in the Civil War, were an infernal nuisance. The men to a great extent were simply scum, and though they had good officers, were completely out of control. One of them tried to force his way into the house of a brother of Commodore Sigsbee; Mr. Sigsbee shot him down, and gave himself up to the Commander-in-Chief, who simply placed a special guard on Sigsbee's property. The troops would march down to Coconut Grove, and often spent the noon hour on the Barnacle grounds, when the Commodore would be hard put to it to preserve both the peace and his property. All the men were fascinated by the coconuts, and of course helped themselves, but one New Orleans company of released prisoners tried to shoot them off the trees. As this would inevitably kill the trees, the Commodore managed to stop it, and then turned with relief to a company of Texans — some of the "cowboy desperados" heartily feared by everybody, who were really by far the most decent of the lot, and extremely appreciative of such little favors as were shown them. Immediately, however, there was a terrific crash behind him, and he turned, to see one of the ex-convicts collapsed on the ground, with coconuts scattered about him. He had been halfway up one of the trees when a huge bunch of nuts which had its stem half shot off gave way and completely overwhelmed him. They thought him dead, but he eventually revived; and then the Texans drove off the entire New Orleans outfit, and warned it permanently off the place!

So passed the brief opera-bouffe of the Spanish War for Miami.





## V

### YACHT DESIGNING

THE yacht designing which the Commodore had for many years done only for himself or for close friends, mainly those whom he had interested in southern Florida, assumed a broader phase after the fascinating waters of the reef and keys became more generally known. *Presto* and her successors, *Micco*, *Wabun* and *Utilis*, with Hine's *Nethla*, had widely demonstrated the virtues of the *Presto* type. Another, *Oriole*, a 55-foot ketch, was built in 1888 for Commodore Astor, owner of *Awixa*; after the latter's strenuous adventures on the way south, as related, he decided that an abler boat was called for — but he never brought *Oriole* south.

In 1899 two larger ketches were turned out, and for the next eight years the Commodore's drawing board was kept busy, and the little boathouse at Coconut Grove saw many interesting plans develop, and many business acquaintances grow into close friends. In this period twenty-one boats from 35 to 80 feet long were built, many of them at "Uncle Cris" Brown's yard. Of these, twelve were direct successors of *Presto* — primarily sailing yachts, though nearly all with auxiliary engines; seven were cruising launches, with auxiliary sails, their lines adapted from *Presto*, one was an 80-foot sailing houseboat, and one a shoal-draft tunnel-stern launch. Besides these, a small sharpie, several larger boats not finally built, and four "flying proas" (of which more later) were designed.

Much of this work was done for men with no previous knowledge of the Commodore, who came into the region in the years of development following the railroad, and heard of him as an authority on shoal-draft yachts. All



of them, however, became good friends afterward, so that the business, with all its associations, added much to the interest and pleasure of the Commodore's life, besides making acceptable additions to his income.

The year 1907 may be said to mark the change from sailing yachts to power-boats for Florida cruising. The gasoline engine was well established, and its great power and growing reliability attracted many former lovers of sail. The high-powered houseboat, with its wonderful comfort, was especially adapted to the sheltered waters of the keys, and made admirable fishing headquarters. Altogether but few sailing yachts were built until after the Great War, and the Commodore's designing was once more limited to a few boats for "sailing cranks" among his close friends.

His productions were all successful, some outstandingly so. One feature of his work as a designer is unusual — the constant effort toward simplicity of rig and detail, which does not appeal as a rule to either designer or owner. To him, both beauty and efficiency demand the elimination of every possible complication, whether of hull, rig or gear. I have heard him say, "I would cheerfully sit up all night to cut out one superfluous rope from a sail-plan." The handiness of the resulting rigs is great; many of his boats of forty feet or more have been handled day after day by one man, and the saving in both weight and windage aloft is an important item in ability and speed.

Among his earlier boats, the stories of *Kingfish* and *Presto* have been told. The Hines' *Pelican* was sold when *Nethla* was planned, and a few years later was caught by a hurricane in Key West Harbor and broken up. *Nethla* in turn was sold to W. W. Kenyon, struck by lightning at Daytona, rebuilt, resold and lost sight of until recent years, when she reappeared in the Miami River unrigged and made into a double-decked, power-driven excursion-boat, in which form she is still running. Walter Browne's ketch *Holgazana* served him for some years and in the





first popularity of power was unrigged, cut in two, lengthened and made a launch. Kirk Munroe's sharpie-ketch *Allapatta*, after twenty years' service, was blown from her mooring in the hurricane of October, 1906, and must have been driven into some inaccessible nook among the mangroves, or else into the Stream, for no trace of her was ever found. *Micco's* story has been told; she is still sound and serviceable.

*Wabun*, after two years, went to Will McCormick, and for nearly ten years haunted the reef and the keys on his fishing and hunting trips. He eventually sold her to Bob Kemp of Key West, a cigar-maker by trade, who wanted her for a party-boat. He borrowed part of her price, and repaid it by running a few loads of bananas from Cuba and peddling them along the coast. As a sailor he was a good deal of a driver, and claimed to have made the run from Cape Florida to Key West, wing and wing all the way before a hauling northeaster, 130 sea-miles, in fourteen hours. At all events, he was very fond of the boat, but without power the party business did not pay, and in 1906 he sold her to my father; for the next nineteen years, from her Coconut Grove mooring, she ranged from Cedar Keys to Cape Cod, and to the Bahamas. In 1925 she went to Wilfred Cook, who has made several trips to Cuba; she promises many years of service still.

*Utilis* I have spoken of. In 1906, after twelve years with the Commodore, she went to his old friend and neighbor, A. B. Gardner, and joined many of the shorter cruises in the next few years. Then, wanting a boat with more space and power, Gardner built *Arlega*, a cousin of *For-nella*, and *Utilis* was humiliated by losing her masts and having a high and awkward cabin built on her for party-service. In 1899 came *Cero*, 62-foot ketch, at Brown's, for Henry S. Hovey, of Hovey & Co., Boston. The Commodore and Mrs. Munroe took her south for him that fall. After Mr. Hovey's death she was sold to one of the Commodores of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club.



At the same time was built *Crescent*, a similar boat of 65 feet, for the president of the Crescent Bicycle Co. of Syracuse. She was taken south by Dan Lund, with the Hines, the voyage being described in one of the picturesque Hine logs. She was later sold to Mr. Moore, president of the Pacific Coast exposition at San Francisco, and was flagship of the San Francisco Yacht Club for several years. This year also a 65 foot-ketch was designed for Mr. Thornton, a friend of Hovey's, but his health was not good, and she was not built.

In 1900 came *Savalo*, a 65-foot ketch for F. Gray Griswold of New York, a famous rod-fisherman, who cruised regularly from Nova Scotia to Cuba. Later he built a larger ketch, *Kona*, which covered 38,917 sea-miles under command of one man, Captain Dahlberg. He was an old deep-water sailor, and very dubious about the virtues of any shoal-draft boat at sea — was, in fact, reluctant to take command of her. After a few voyages, however, he became an ardent supporter, ready to back these boats for any distance under any conditions.

*Kona's* subsequent career was picturesque. When Mr. Griswold ceased his tarpon-fishing she was sold to a Savannah firm who held her for charter. It afterward appeared, however, that their chief business was rum-running, and *Kona* made many surreptitious trips to Nassau. The business was a thorough test of staunchness, for the boats were always overloaded and rather preferred bad weather, in which they could more easily avoid observation. At last, however, her skipper sailed from Stirrup Cay one bad night rather too eagerly. According to one of the survivors, there were 1,150 cases of liquor on board, and the glass was "pumping" but "the American people need that booze," said the skipper, and *Kona* was headed for St. Catherine's Sound, Georgia. The weather was exceedingly suspicious — a succession of fierce squalls from the northeast — and a hurricane



was evidently in the making, but they hoped to get in before it broke.

Somewhere at sea, about off St. John's bar, a moment's carelessness jibed the mainsail and parted the peak halyards, and by this time conditions were such that they could not reeve off new ones. *Kona* was run off for the Florida coast under fore-staysail, making good weather of it in spite of the mountainous seas, which swept her boats out of their lashings. (The surf next day was said to be the heaviest for many years.) They presently sighted the lights on the St. John's jetties, and being unable to heave to or claw offshore without the mainsail, they endeavored to enter. Ten minutes later she crashed on the jagged rocks of the jetty; the backwash lifted her off, and she struck again, and again. The fourth blow crushed her like an egg — her spars went into fragments, and she melted into flotsam; daylight showed only her centerboard, perched on the rocks.

Her crew clung to the jetty until the seas washed them off, one after another; two were drowned, but the stronger swimmers got to the beach and took refuge in a fisherman's hut. Many cases of bottles were washed up, and next day their host collected some 1,700 bottles, and settled down with the avowed intention of drinking it all. The crew, carefully avoiding rescuers and authorities, worked its way back to Savannah, and all were supposed to have drowned. And so ended *Kona* — in a gallant fight against a hurricane, overloaded, recklessly driven, and finally beaten only by the loss of her mainsail, and the lack of sea-room.

Then *Carib* in 1901 — a "labor of love" for she was designed for the Commodore's good friend Haigh at Cat Cay as previously told. She passed a long and adventurous life without mishap, save losing one of her spars in a white squall off Santiago, Cuba. Later on she spent many years at moorings off Asbury Park beach, where her owner, Captain Maddox, took daily fishing





parties off in surf-boats. He lived on board, some half-mile offshore; in severe weather he either dropped his mooring, ran off to sea and hove to, or slipped inside Sandy Hook or Atlantic City. In winter he fished with her off Hatteras. She is now fishing out of Savannah, with a great reputation for staunchness along the whole coast. The Commodore is convinced she is as able at sea, and far more comfortable and safe than any possible keel-boat of her size, and recommends her without change or qualification as the best small boat for a voyage around the world.

In 1901 was put out a 35-foot adaptation of *Utilis*, for Mr. Montgomery. In 1902 came the Commodore's first concession to the growing vogue of power in *Fornella*, a 36-foot power-cruiser with centerboard and auxiliary sails, especially adapted to the errands of Mr. Waters Davis between the Grove and his Cape Florida property. Naturally, the Commodore has not been interested in the designing of power-boats pure and simple, and all of the auxiliary launches which followed *Fornella* carried enough sail to make reasonably good time in any but the lightest airs; while the centerboard he considers almost as useful under power as under sail, to facilitate quick maneuvering and prevent hard steering in strong fore and aft or quartering wind and sea.

The drawing room was unusually busy in 1903, producing four large boats, another design not used, and two proas. The first was *Normona*, the largest of his ketches, 80 feet overall, for S. M. Taylor, noted mining engineer. Taylor dropped in at the boathouse one day quite casually saying, "I don't know anything about boats, but the doctor wants me to go cruising, and they say you are the man to build the boat."

"Well, where do you want to cruise?"

"Don't know — perhaps the West Indies."

"What about cost?"

"Don't know — a comfortable boat for five or six peo-



ple — you know the rest. How much will it take to start her? Three or four thousand? Here you are!” and he was off to supper. The Commodore heard no more from him until *Normona* was almost ready for sea. Her final cost was about \$50,000, which was high for those days, but he wanted the best in fittings and furnishings throughout; the upholstery bill was the biggest item.

Mr. Taylor had but little use of her. Shortly after starting on his first cruise, on the Maine coast, he was summoned to Pittsburgh to direct rescue work after a terrible mine explosion, in which four or five hundred men were killed or trapped. Several engineers had already been injured, some men released, and many bodies recovered. He made his plans, entered the mine to see them carried out, and was killed. *Normona* went to four other owners, finally settling at Fort Myers which has been her headquarters for many years.

*Granatza*, 67-foot ketch for N. M. George of Danbury, Connecticut, followed. She was sold within a short time to Julian Story, and renamed *Rita*, and her career seemed to justify the old belief that a change of name is unlucky. She struck the wreck of the old iron steamship near Fowey Rock, and two frames ran through her bottom near the bow, sinking her, and pinning her rigidly to the bottom. Negro divers were sent down, and succeeded in sawing off the frames; then a tug dragged her into smooth shoal water near Soldier Key, her bow lifted but her stern on bottom nearly all the way. There she was patched with canvas, pumped out and towed to Miami, where the Commodore and “Uncle Cris” Brown, her builder, saw her on the ways — a sorry sight. Keel and rudder were worn off smooth to the planking by the coral over which she had been dragged. They made her a new rudder, spliced in a bit of keel, and sailed her to Tottenville, where she was thoroughly repaired.

These negro divers, by the way, were wonderful men. One of them, Broome, had been employed by the Com-





modore in dynamiting wrecks, and showed the most amazing endurance and coolness. He could work under water for a full minute and more, and would light his long fuse on a heavy charge of dynamite, dive down with it as coolly as though swimming for pleasure, place it just right, and quietly swim away to await the explosion, while the onlookers shuddered.

A few years later *Rita* again left Miami for New York with a Norwegian skipper and seven men, was sighted off Canaveral, standing northeast against a rising gale — and never was seen or heard of again. A good deal of money was spent seeking traces of her, especially in the form of wreckage, for which the Bahamas and the coast as far as Hatteras were scoured, but nothing ever turned up. Mr. Story of course regretted the lives lost, and besides was very fond of the boat and anxious to know her fate. She must have been run down, and any floating fragments carried away by the Stream.

In 1903 also *Star*, an enlarged *Fornella*, 50 feet overall, was built for Mr. Clemson, maker of Star hack-saw blades. There was joking talk about supplying the workshop with blades, but before this was done, Mr. Clemson died.

Next year, 1904, came *Novia*, 75-foot ketch, for Mr. Van Vleck, one of Rockefeller's few serious competitors, who kept his oil business in spite of the Standard's efforts to absorb it. He and Mrs. Van Vleck landed at the wharf one day and asked about a boat for comfort, health and tarpon-fishing. Further than that he did not know what he wanted — "Ask Mrs. Van Vleck; I'll sit down here and look at the water."

So she came up to the drawing room, opened her pocket-book and produced a memorandum with a list of mysterious figures. They proved to be the dimensions of two wardrobe trunks for which space must be provided in her stateroom! There were no other requirements, so *Novia* was built around two trunks.

One of the most interesting of the Commodore's ex-



periences was tried this year for Mr. John Price Wetherill of Philadelphia. He wanted a picturesque sailing houseboat for Florida waters, and starting with the idea of a pirate galleon, they finally arrived at the 80-foot, flat-bottomed, flush-decked topsail-schooner *Savanilla*. With *two* centerboards, forward and aft, she sailed well, even to windward, and handled with great ease. Mr. Wetherill objected to the dirt, noise, smell and inconvenience of gasoline engines, so *Savanilla* traveled only under sail, or was towed by her powerful tender-launch. The result was a clean, quiet, unobstructed houseboat, which traveled silently and comfortably, had exceptionally fine staterooms, with large square ports, which had the outward appearance of a frigate's gunports, and an unbroken flush-deck.

For her voyage south she was put in charge of an old captain of steam-yachts, against the Commodore's advice. With little experience in sail, and none at all in shoal boats, the old chap insisted on having her *towed* down, at huge expense, whereas any of the Bay boys could have made a first-class run with her under sail. On the Bay the skipper insisted that she would not handle, and Mr. Wetherill finally asked the Commodore to demonstrate on a week's cruise. She behaved so well that after a few days the old skipper was shipped north and the Bahama Alburys put in charge. Many a happy party cruised the keys on her with Mr. Wetherill as host, and after his death she went to a moving-picture company for her picturesque qualities.

The same year brought a 50-foot auxiliary ketch, *Yuma*, for Mr. Worthington, and a 40-foot *Fornella*-boat, *Buckeye*, for General W. B. Shattuck, both of which were long familiar to the Bay. There was also the Commodore's only purely power-boat, the tunnel-stern towing launch *Loon* for Mr. W. J. Matheson. She was an interesting experiment in screw propulsion for very light draft and made a satisfactory work and errand-boat.



Another busy year was 1906, with four boats built and two more designs unused. First were three auxiliary launches, *Scallop*, 36 feet, for Mr. L. Q. Jones; *Tommy Traddles*, 48 feet, for Mr. Vincent Hubbell, and *Dragon*, 50 feet, for Mr. H. L. Park of Park & Tilford, all well known on the Bay. Then came *Melody*, a 36-foot adaptation of *Utilis*, which she was to replace, offering better accommodations for the Commodore's two children, Patty and Wirth, then six and four years old. Framed and planked at Miami, she was finished at Coconut Grove, where "Uncle Cris" Brown spent the first winter of his retirement in helping the Commodore at this congenial task.

The Commodore had long been struck by the little use made of the decks alongside the ordinary trunk cabin, and also by the mechanical difficulties in making that construction strong and water-tight. So in *Melody* he adopted a straight raised-deck plan, carrying the frames up to the cabin roof, and extending the latter out to the gunwale and forward to the cutwater. This made a beautifully strong and rigid construction, with flush-deck forward of the cockpit which could be covered with canvas like the top of a trunk cabin, and so made certainly and permanently water-proof. The result was an interior like the saloon of a 50-foot schooner, with four generous transom berths, galley and tool-locker aft, and toilet forward, all well lighted and ventilated by a row of rectangular ports with sliding glass. These ports, while proof against rain and spray, would not be water-tight if submerged — but they have never come anywhere near that severe test, and the plan has been entirely satisfactory. The whole scheme, in fact, has been so perfectly weather-proof that *Melody* was the first boat the Commodore ever had whose deck joiner-work proved completely water-tight, even in the 1926 hurricane; this gale she rode out at her mooring in the open bay, the only boat to do so, while six hundred were swamped or driven ashore.





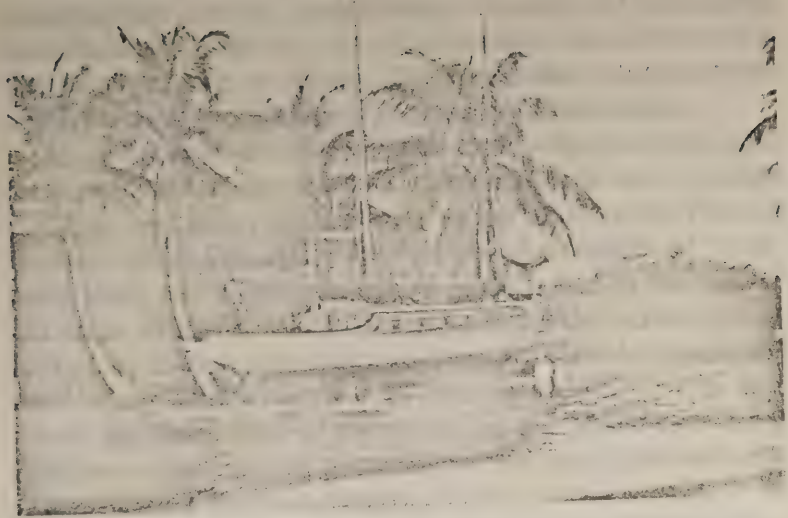
Her cockpit also was enlarged, proportionately with the cabin, the coaming being flush with her sides and extending to the taffrail. The seats on either side were on what would have been the deck, and gave room for a large party, being eight feet long and wide enough for comfortable beds. She was practical and comfortable in the extreme, and now, after twenty-four years, rejoices in a new jib-headed rig as Wirth's yacht. She gave great satisfaction to the Commodore and his family and friends, and has been copied four times.

After 1906 sails went more and more out of favor in the growing vogue of power, and more power — and for that and other reasons the Commodore's drawing-board largely ceased its activity. It was not until 1914 that another boat was turned out — *Tramp*, a slightly enlarged *Melody*, for Mr. Bancroft C. Davis of Boston, a faithful lover of sailing, and long a delightful member of the Camp Biscayne circle. Her crew accommodation being somewhat scant, she was followed next year by *Evangeline*, still a little larger, built by Lawley, which remained in Mr. Davis's hands for ten years. As he had had a long yachting career and owned many boats of many types, eighteen of which were built for him by Lawley, his satisfaction in *Evangeline* was a marked tribute to her type. She joined most of the short fleet cruises, and Bill and Benny Stanley, the efficient Nova Scotia brothers who manned her, were familiar and popular figures on the Bay. Many a delicious dinner was served to the assembled occupants of *Melody*, *Wabun* and others of the little fleet in her capacious saloon, and many a good talk followed in her long cockpit.

*Tramp* was sold to Homer Saint-Gaudens, and after a number of cruises in Florida waters explored the Bahamas under the guidance of his father-in-law, Dr. Dolley, of Nassau. She still makes frequent cruises in that wonderful region.

During the Great War yachting on the bay was





"MELODY," 1906



"MELODY," 1927





naturally at a minimum, and since then the predominance of power-boats has held the Commodore's affectionate interest in nautical affairs within comparatively narrow limits. Power-craft have been to him much what automobiles are to horse-lovers — wonderful machines, invaluable to business, but with no claim to consideration for pleasure use, to those who remember and love the earlier and more fascinating means of locomotion.

As in the case of horses, fortunately, there is more and more general recognition of this, and sails are in some measure returning to their own on pleasure craft. Thanks to the faithful few of the yacht club who continued to occupy their moorings during this period, and to the water-activities of the two boys' schools, the little harbor never lacked at least a few masts to keep up the old tradition, and an occasional spread of canvas working in or out across the flats. And of course it did not lessen the Commodore's interest and pleasure in this that most of these boats were of his own design.

In the last few years the Commodore has had the best possible ally in "Captain Nat" Herreshoff, dean of American designers. About 1920 the friendship of earlier years at Bristol was renewed when Mr. and Mrs. Herreshoff came south on their power-cruiser *Helianthus*, and fell in love with Coconut Grove. They were soon installed in a cottage on the Commodore's grounds, and have spent long winters there ever since. *Helianthus* being too deep to enter the little harbor, and the local interest in sails encouraging Mr. Herreshoff in his lifelong devotion to canvas, he designed *Pleasure*, a neat thirty-footer, finely modeled and lightly built.

*Pleasure* was of course much too spry, especially to windward, for the Commodore's able but heavier cruisers, and eventually this led to *Sunset*, a 26-foot sloop, deeper, finer and more heavily ballasted than the typical *Presto*-boat, light to handle, and spry enough to accompany *Pleasure* on more equal terms.



This association, with endless discussions of other boats, has been a constant delight to the Commodore and to Mr. Herreshoff, and has led to sufficient disagreement, earnest discussion and raillery to keep the days at the boathouse jolly and interesting.

The next *Presto*-boat, and to date the last, came in 1924, when the Commodore combined the lines of *Carib* with an adaptation of *Melody's* raised-deck construction to make *Alice*, a very able and wholesome 52-foot cruiser for Henry Howard. Two of these were built together at Brown's yard at Tottenville, for him and his friend Max Mauran, and Howard's very full and careful planning of details and his extensive and picturesque cruises, together with his own reputation as chemical engineer and organizer, have attracted wide attention to his boat and her creditable performances.

Altogether the Commodore looks with pardonable pride on the list of *Presto*-boats and their careers. It is usually taken for granted that those yachtsmen unfortunate enough to live on shoal waters are thereby forced to build shoal-draft boats, and do the best they can under that handicap. That is far from being his case, for from his earliest knowledge of the water his attention was especially drawn to the shoal craft that sailed the North Atlantic from New York. In many cases it was evident that they were as able, far more comfortable to their crews and far less strained by severe conditions at sea, than keel-boats of their size.

With the present increasing interest in ocean cruising all over the world, it is natural that most yachtsmen should turn to deep outside ballast as the immediate and obvious way to get certain and ample stability — which it is. But a good *Presto*-boat has ample stability, with great additional strength, comfort and safety.

It is certainly true that shoal draft is unpopular just now — the boat-lists seem to run some 99 per cent keel — but the possibilities of shoal draft can hardly be forgotten



when three-quarters of our coast line demand it, and I fully believe that as this new generation of ocean-cruisers develops and matures it will turn more and more to sound centerboard design, for comfort, safety, durability and greater range.

I have postponed mention of one very interesting sideline in the Commodore's drawing room — namely, the "flying proas." He had long been interested in these remarkable little craft with their outriggers and odd lateen sails, which used to range the South Pacific in all weathers, and were said to outsail large ships, in a stiff breeze, when they were running ten or twelve knots — a speed at least double that possible to any small sailboat. Their general principles were obvious from the few ancient drawings published in old voyages — a long, easy-lined hull, with no stability, supported by an outrigger to windward which had sufficient buoyancy to hold the hull upright when not sailing.

In 1898 the Commodore decided to build one, and after consulting all available data, most of which were in early volumes of exploration, he drew a simple, flat-bottomed canoe-like affair — a sort of elongated double-ended sharpie — 29 feet long and 3 feet wide. On it were mounted springy outrigger-planks, 10 feet long, holding a white pine log float. On a well-stayed mast amidships was set a high, narrow lateen sail, laced to yard and boom, of such construction that its tack and clew could be easily and quickly exchanged, making either end of the boat the bow at will — for, of course, the outrigger must be kept to windward, and in changing tacks it was necessary to sail the boat in the opposite direction. Lateral resistance was supplied by two deep dagger-centerboards amidships, and she was steered with an oar.

The results were extremely interesting. They set sail on the trial trip with the greatest curiosity, fully prepared to swim, and expecting behavior as sensationally "different" as the appearance of the queer craft. The only surprise,





however, proved to be the comfort and stability she showed. They sheeted home and moved off with a strangely matter-of-fact air; as they felt her out, a slight puff lifted the outrigger clear of the water and they expected an instant "flop," but it did not come. She was strangely stable thus balanced between sail and outrigger, and when close-hauled they soon found it possible, by a judicious combination of careful steering and quick shifting in and out on the outrigger planks by the crew, to ride her like a bicycle, keeping the outrigger clear of the water for some minutes at a time. Meanwhile they began to realize how close she was pointing, and how amazingly she was footing at the same time. She would keep going far beyond ordinary windward speed of small craft, and the farther they tested her, the more amazed they were!

Coming about was a queer upheaval of precedent. Instead of luffing, they bore sharp off, slacking away the sheet. One man jumped to the tack-lanyard, cast it off, and ran to the opposite end of the boat, passing the tack to leeward of the hull and immediately bowsing it down in its new position at what had been the stern, but was now to be the bow. Meanwhile the steersman had carried his oar in the other direction, and as the sheet was trimmed in (at the new "stern") the boat gathered way, headed up and was off on the new tack. It was an amazing and fascinating business, and the way the strange machine crabbed to windward was certainly far beyond the performance of any other small boats. They found themselves across the Bay in no time, and the next question was, what would she do running free?

They headed off cautiously, and with this much practice found it fairly easy to keep her outrigger out of water with wind on the beam; the resulting speed, with her large sail and shell-like hull, may be imagined, and was certainly exhilarating. Slowly they edged her off, with ever increasing speed and growing delight, and then sud-



denly came the final revelation of what manner of beast they were riding.

With the growing wind on the quarter, outrigger in air and spray flying, they were traveling at a very high speed for a small boat. Then suddenly, with a little extra puff, the fore part of the boat *lifted* under them and, skimming the surface like a skipping stone, leaped into a surprising burst of speed. The sea beneath swept by like a cataract, vague and foam-streaked, the tugging steering oar cut a clear open cleft in the water and threw up on either side a long rainbow of spray, while the boat itself rested so lightly on the water that she made little, if any, disturbance in her flight. They stole hurried, ecstatic glances at each other. How fast *were* they going? What sort of creature was this proa? And what on earth was she doing?

The facts are that the proa, though it had the limitations of an ordinary boat when sailed close to the wind, quite literally took wings after slacking off even a small portion of the sheet. Except when close-hauled by the wind, the outrigger proved entirely unnecessary and no excess of wind had any other effect on her except to make her go faster and faster with her bow literally soaring in air. Her limit was never reached even in the hardest summer squalls, and it is probable that the only limit that would ever handicap her would be the limit of the steersman's power.

Remember, this was in the days before hydroplanes; but the proa didn't know that planing hadn't been discovered, and that is just what she was doing. Her speed? Well, they afterwards took her over a measured half-mile at the rate of eighteen miles an hour, while on other occasions when they couldn't time her, she went considerably faster. When you think that four or five miles is fair speed for a canoe, and that this proa was nothing but an enlarged canoc, with a few inches of freeboard, you may guess at the effect of a three-minute rate in her, especially





in the days when the most powerful racing motor-boat could do little better.

These gay craft inspired a sonnet from the pen of John R. Strong:

### THE FLYING PROA

#### BISCAYNE BAY

'Mid passing waves, glides on my boat's keen keel,  
Responsive to my hand, as blithely free  
As swallow o'er her meadows, all the fee  
Of the wide plains is mine, so light to feel  
Minutest alterations in the breeze, to heel  
The slight mast and its kite-shaped sail; we flee  
Large lengths of miles upon the silver sea,  
Finding in Ocean all reward for zeal.  
The slender midships mast a lateen sail,  
With delicate cordage, holds, and balance o'er  
This nautilus its air-float can avail.  
For novelty prayed, the cry along the shore,  
Neptune the Flying Proa gave, so hail  
The prettiest racer, thank the Commodore!

The Commodore afterward built several proas, for the boys' schools and others, some of them a little faster, but none more generally successful than this first experiment. Of late years there has been a proa club, fostered by the yacht club, with some good racing, and altogether the reconstruction of ancient South Sea design produced a lot of good fun and brought out a number of interesting points.

They of course anticipated capsizes in the beginning, and wondered what could be done with a swamped proa. As a matter of fact it occurred but seldom, and then gave comparatively little trouble. It was quite possible to lower the sail, right her, bale out and start afresh; of course there was no ballast, and even when filled with water, she would keep several people afloat. When thus filled, provided there was a fresh wind, it was only necessary to sheet the sail home and she would start with a leap, and *sail herself out from under the water in her*, leaving only a little to be scooped out later, under way! She was lots of fun.



## VI

### WRECKS AND WRECKING

THE picturesque days of wrecking, with their false lights and stolen goods, may have melted away into the shadows of history, along with the pirates and buccaneers, while the wrecks of today suggest only formal contracts between wrecking companies and underwriters, carried out by divers, steam winches, pumps, barges, tugs and the multifarious equipment of modern engineering, under the cold eye of the authorities, as a strictly business proposition. But human nature is not much changed, after all, and wherever conflicting interests clash there may be found devious and peculiar methods of doing business.

There was a deal of human nature, of various kinds, involved in the wreck of the *Copenhagen*, in 1900, while the Commodore was Beach Agent for the Merritt & Chapman Wrecking Co. A large steamer being reported ashore on Hillsboro Reef, the Commodore went at once to investigate, and found the *Copenhagen*, loaded with coal. On his report the company announced a wrecking fleet to sail next day, and this occasioned an interesting bit of smart work by the Browns at Tottenville. In their yard was a large Swampscott dory, built the previous year for *Cero*, but by error of the builders, much too large. Being left on the Commodore's hands, it awaited a good chance for shipment south, and here it was. Hurrying to the telegraph office, the Commodore wired "Have dory loaded on tug *Merritt* by seven tomorrow morning."

The message was delayed and did not reach Brown's that night. Next morning George Brown went to the station to take the train for New York, and the agent handed him the message. Turning to the wagon which



had brought him, he rushed it back to the yard, holding the train meanwhile, and in a few minutes the dory was perched on top of the tender of the passenger train, with two men to hold it in place. So it traveled the length of Staten Island to Stapleton, passing in the outskirts the Merritt & Chapman wharf. There was a grade crossing over the road to the wharf, where the train always slowed up; this time it stopped, and the dory was lifted off. Brown meanwhile rushed down to the wharf, whence he could see the *Merritt*, already cast off, and maneuvering to get a line to the barge. His wild whoops and calls at last attracted their attention, the tug returned to the wharf, and took on the dory! It was a record shipment from New York to Hillsboro, where the dory arrived in a few days, and was put to immediate use.

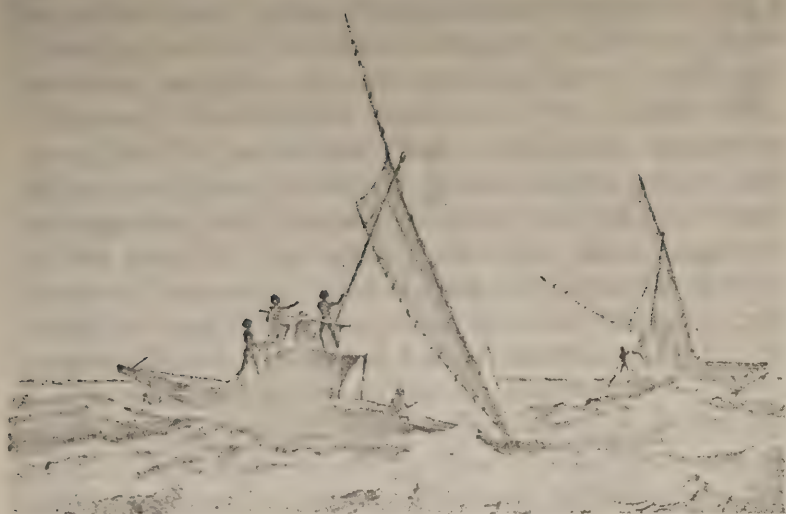
It was soon evident that the *Copenhagen* must be unloaded, which was no light task. The huge centrifugal pumps of the tugs were put to work, sucking coal and water together out of the steamer, with a diver stationed by the inlet cage to see that it did not choke — no comfortable assignment in the black water within the hull, with great lumps of coal whirling wildly into the mouth of the pump.

Very soon after this began, U. D. Hendrickson, of Lake Worth, appeared in his old schooner *Emily B*, and asked for a load of coal, for which there was some sale at Key West. As a rule such a petition would receive scant consideration, as the company's only object was to get rid of the coal, and anyone taking it from the pump outlet would have had to take his chance of swamping.

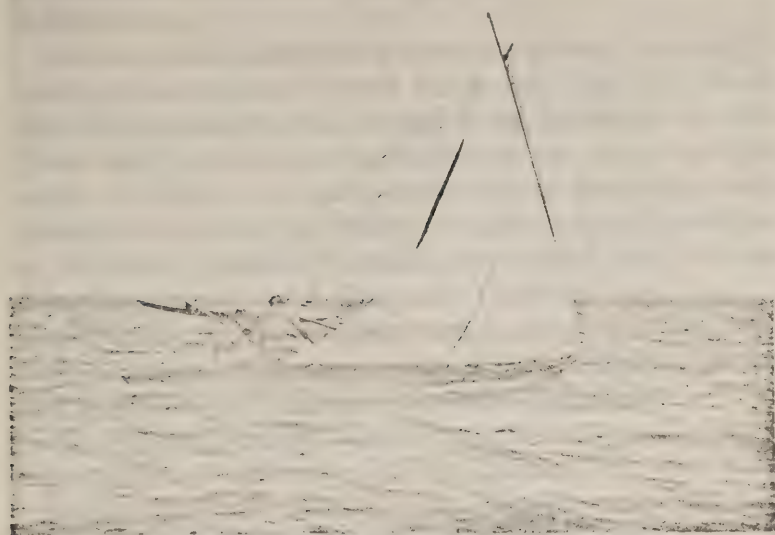
But the Commodore had already told some stories of Mr. Hendrickson, including his famous excuse for one of the many foundering of the *Emily*. She was a flat-bottomed schooner, and at one stage of her varied career some fifteen feet of overhang had been built onto her stern and a small triangular jigger added, which gave her the unusual dignity of being a three-master. On the







ANCIENT FRENCH PRINT OF SOUTH SEA PROA



THE FIRST "FLYING PROA"



occasion in question she had given up the ghost in the Bay after a run up the Hawk Channel during which a following sea had frequently chugged solidly up under her stern, wagging the new overhang like a duck's tail. "You see," Hendrickson would say, "the builder did a cheap job. He just butted all the new planks against the old, on one frame, so that the planks did not help to hold her together, and I knew a following sea like that would lift the stern off her unless it was held down somehow. So when I turned in I told my mate if it breezed up to be careful to keep his dinghy on the stern-davits. But he was no seaman and I shouldn't have trusted him. He let the dinghy tow, and of course the sea loosened up all those seams, so that we just got her into the Bay before she sank!" The weight of such a boat, of course, would be nothing against the power of the sea, and this yarn had been received with howls of derision and unbelief. All hands were accordingly glad to get some of Hendrickson's yarns at first hand, and he provided a rich store of entertainment while the *Emily* was loaded with unusual deliberation.

One day while operations were at this stage an English tramp steamer came down the coast. She was the *St. Oswald*, Captain Curtis, bound from Baltimore to Vera Cruz with 3,800 tons of coal. Seeing the large wrecking outfit at work, and the weather being fine, they came close in to see what was doing — so close that there began to be some question whether she would take bottom. Lloyd's agent on the *Chapman*, Captain Boyt, was an Englishman, and wondered much as to this behavior. The Commodore guessed what the *St. Oswald's* skipper had in mind, and expressed it somewhat thus:

"It is good weather, and a smooth sea, and he sees a big wrecking outfit here, for the moment idle. Just think what a bonanza it would be to Merritt and Chapman, if the *St. Oswald* should make a mistake and go on the beach tonight, quietly. The tugs could pull her off with





practically no cost and turn in a whacking bill to the underwriters. Why, the company could afford to pay the skipper several thousand dollars, just for putting her ashore a bit too hard to get off with his own gear. Probably that's what he wants."

The Commodore had found that the most comfortable place for his bed was the roof of the *Copenhagen's* pilot-house, and was sound asleep there the next night when the Ball Brothers' *Privateer*, under charter as supply ship, arrived from New River with a load of water. A few minutes later he was softly awakened by Charley Ball, who shook him by the shoulder and whispered excitedly, "Commodore! Wake up! There's a big steamer ashore just below New River. Come on, we can unload our water and go right back and be first aboard." (The first skipper boarding a wreck became "wreck-captain," directed salvage operations and was entitled to extra commissions.)

"Hold on, Charley, you can't do that; you're under charter to Merritt and Chapman," and a long whispered argument ensued, in which at last the wrecking spirit had to yield to reason. Then Captain Tucker of the *Merritt* was called, but he was equally unable to take on any new job, being under contract to Lloyd's to save the *Copenhagen*. Finally Captain Boyt, of Lloyd's, was taken into the discussion and consented to the use of one tug, the *Merritt*, and one man, George Hume, cable and tackle expert, since they were not needed for the next few days on the *Copenhagen* work. As Beach Agent the Commodore was not necessarily confined to the *Copenhagen*, and so was free to take charge of the *St. Oswald* job. Bright and early the next morning he sailed on the *Merritt*, with Captain Boyt, Hume, a four-ton anchor, and a long fifteen-inch hawser.

All went as expected. The *St. Oswald* rested comfortably quite uninjured, ready to be moved at the next tide. A few rather abortive efforts toward this were in evidence;

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two anchors, much too small, had been laid, and a strain put on their cables, while cargo was being thrown overboard, *a coal bucket at a time!* Thus the stage was set, and on the appearance of the fine wrecking tug, Captain Curtis was delighted, and stepped to the rail all primed for negotiations with the wrecking company, to "sell" them this job. The Commodore went over first and was greeted effusively and welcomed aboard; then came Captain Boyt, and was introduced as the agent of Lloyd's, the all-powerful insurers of British shipping. Alas for Captain Curtis's little honorarium! Away it flew, leaving the Captain to face the discredit of having beached his ship with no chance of cash recompense!

His face changed. He turned on his heel, very glum, and would scarcely speak, saying only, "I don't need any help — I'll get her off next tide," and pointing to the buckets of coal going overside.

The Commodore must, of course, assent. "Very well, Captain. Have you any objection to my staying on board, so as to protect the rights of Merritt and Chapman in any help you may need?"

"No," he responded shortly, "I don't want anybody here — I shan't let any other wreckers aboard." But there would have been no difficulty in dealing with the Key West boys, and the Commodore took him aside.

"Look here, Captain, we saw you yesterday coming down the coast, and I know just exactly how you went on the reef here, and *why!* And I want to stay here until you get off." The Captain blinked — and consented, and the Commodore got his valise from the tug. Arrangements were made for a signal which could be seen from New River, where a man could be stationed to watch for it, and the *Merritt* returned to Hillsboro. How he would fare as to food and shelter the Commodore did not know, but having given in, Captain Curtis was decent enough and accepted him as a guest, with all comforts provided.



The play lasted two days longer, and then the Captain consented to be helped, and the signal was set. Next morning George Hume was on hand with the tug, laid the big anchor astern of the *St. Oswald* and rigged the huge purchases on its cable. This was an interesting exhibition, by the way, of the very special skill required to judge and regulate the tremendous strains put on this heavy gear. (The purchase was of double blocks four feet high, each of which had to be handled alone by a steam winch.) With a hand on the rigged tackle Hume seemed to estimate to a pound the stress put upon it, and the remaining margin of strength. He had also a lively sense of humor, and was much tickled by the circumstances of this work. When his anchor was down and the tug put him aboard the *St. Oswald*, he stepped smartly up to the Commodore, saluted, and said, "I am to report to you, Captain Munroe. The anchor is laid; give your orders, sir!" Then, in an irrepressible aside, "The domdest expedition Merritt and Chapman ever sent out — a superintendent and one man!"

During the evening a fresh northeast breeze brought in some sea, and on the high tide at midnight, with the swell to loosen her up, the steamer was pulled off and soon lay to her own anchor outside the reef. She was lifted and dropped on the rocks more than once in the process, and her big load of coal must have been pretty hard on her, but she was a well-built Armstrong ship.

Just after sunrise the next morning the Commodore stepped out on her bridge and was immediately hailed from a small schooner hove to alongside, inshore. "Good morning, Captain. I see you got off all right. Won't you give us a job getting your anchors for you?" It was his old friend Billy Filer, of Elliott's Key, who had heard of the wreck the day before and had driven his little schooner hard against the northeast wind all night hoping to be "first aboard," only to find the vessel safely floated. Bitterly disappointed, cold, tired and hungry (they had





rushed off without supper, and there was no stopping for breakfast when wrecking was in process), they were very anxious for some sort of work which might repay them for the trip. Looking up at the bridge with the sun in his eyes, he took the Commodore for the Captain of the ship, and disguising his voice, the Commodore growled that he did not need any help.

"Better let us get that anchor — we'll do it quick and cheap."

"No, don't need you, and it's too heavy for you to lift, anyway."

"Well, let us try it."

"No, no. Nothing doing, boys, I don't want you."

This was too much for Billy. To have all his efforts fall flat after such a strenuous night, and then face the long sail home, brought his feelings irresistibly to the surface. Facing the supposed niggardly captain, Billy told him deliberately and circumstantially just what brand of a triple-starred son of a sea-cook he thought him, winding up by "letting go all holts," dashing his hat on the boat's bottom and dancing a hornpipe on it, filling the air the while with all the picturesque and vitriolic language he could turn his tongue to!

Then the Commodore straightened his hat, leaned down over the rail and said in his natural voice, "Why, Billy! What language for a man like you to use to an old friend! I'm surprised — and you a church-member too!"

Billy looked, gasped, and collapsed into abject apology. Then he and his crew meekly enjoyed a hot breakfast, just ready in the ship's galley, still staring at the Commodore as though they could not believe their eyes; they finally spent the day looking in vain for the two small anchors laid by the *St. Oswald* in the beginning. To the time of his death many years later Billy rarely met the Commodore without making some reference to the completeness with which the joke had been "on him."

Part of the bargain with Captain Curtis was the return



of the Commodore, Hume and the purchases to Hillsboro, but once afloat, he proposed to put them all on the beach, saving a thirty-mile round-trip with the steamer.

"No," said the Commodore, "I refuse."

"Well, then, I'll take you to Vera Cruz."

"All right — I've always wanted to see Vera Cruz; they say it's a fine place . . . but of course you understand we are valuable men, and we come high. You'll have a pretty stiff bill to pay to Merritt and Chapman for all the time we spend with you; and furthermore, the *St. Oswald* won't leave Vera Cruz until it's paid, for I'll libel the ship the moment we land." They were taken back to Hillsboro!

On their arrival, Captain Tucker sent off a 25-foot surf-boat for the men and gear. This, handled whale-boat fashion with a huge steering oar, was a new kind of ship for the Commodore, and was naturally turned over to his command for the return trip. It may have been that Captain Tucker thought the kick of the big sweep might catch the Commodore napping, and they'd have the laugh on the Florida skipper. But nothing untoward happened and Tucker greeted him with hearty congratulations on the floating of the *St. Oswald*.

The next item was the recovery of the big anchor and cable, now marked by a buoy. The Commodore had noted range marks for this buoy — a barrel on the beach in line with a lone palmetto, and so forth — and he took charge of the tug as they approached the scene. This was the *Merritt* and Captain Dave Wolcott was openly skeptical. "Now," said he, "it's up to you to find that anchor."

"All right, Captain, I've got marks on it."

"Oh, they all say that, but Merritt and Chapman have enough anchors lost along the coast to make us both rich."

Captain Dave didn't know all the Commodore's





accomplishments, and his doubts were natural. That anchor-buoy amid miles of waves was but a needle in a haystack, and the ability to select and then remember four features of the low, far-away shore line, so placed that they formed the necessary cross-ranges, is rare.

The Commodore ran the tug in over the reef, circled to leeward, and approached the neighborhood of the grounding under one bell — dead slow. As his ranges began to come into line he remarked, "Getting pretty near," and immediately, as though in answer, the lookout forward sang out "Buoy, right ahead!" Wolcott turned, walked across the bridge and thumped him on the back, exclaiming, "Bully boy! You're one of the few who ever did that, first time!"

The work proceeded on *Copenhagen* until she was unloaded, temporarily patched up, and pumped out ready to pull off. Then came a wire from Merritt and Chapman: "Abandon *Copenhagen* and send outfit to New York. Urgent." The next New York paper reported the big Hoboken fire which left a number of large steamships sunk at their piers, so that every wrecking vessel was imperatively called for. It was more important to Lloyd's to do immediate work in New York than to save the remnant of the *Copenhagen*, and her frames still lie on the Hillsboro rocks.

Then there was a wild rush to get away. There were seven pumps and boilers mounted on the *Copenhagen's* deck, and they were swung back onto the *Haggerty* in record time, the roustabouts being wild to get back to the joys of Cherry Street. Finally only one huge suction hose was left, down in the bunkers, immediately below a large ventilating cowl. The Captain of the *Chapman* thought he could recover it more quickly by pulling off this ventilator, so attaching the vessel's big purchase to the cowl, he hoisted away until the tug heeled nearly decks-to, and the massive wire strop sang with the strain — but still the cowl held fast. Then an eager hand offered



to start it with an axe, and the Captain rather reluctantly consented, taking the assembled crews to witness that the volunteer acted at his own risk. Sure enough, at the second blow the cowl was torn from its seat like a tree uprooted, the tug righted herself with a jerk, and the mass of jagged sheet-iron swooped wildly across, barely missing the pilot-house, and for some time swung crazily back and forth as the tug rolled, threatening serious damage to various parts of her gear. At last it was controlled and dropped overboard, a diver recovered the hose, and the fleet was off, with cheers, leaving the Balls, the Commodore and the Captain on the *Copenhagen*. The only further salvage after so much hard work was a small life-buoy photograph frame, bearing the *Copenhagen's* name, given by the Captain to the Commodore, and now on the library wall at the Barnacle, and her mahogany saloon table, which answered for many years as board table in the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club.

The only man who came out of the story with any discredit was Captain Curtis of the *St. Oswald*, and it is entirely characteristic of the Commodore that he found plausible and pitiable excuse even for him. "Poor devil! You could hardly blame him for hunting an extra dollar. There he was, a well-educated man, in a very responsible position, with a wife and family to support — and merchant skippers were paid about seventy-five dollars a month!"

Another phase of the *St. Oswald's* relations with niggardly owners appears in the story of her end, as told in the New York "Herald," about 1910:

#### LEFT PORT ALEAK, *ST. OSWALD* IS LOST

##### LONDON BOARD OF TRADE OPENS INQUIRY

The vessel had a damaged plate, and after sailing from Baltimore for Hamburg the Captain wrote to his wife:

"We have twelve feet of water in the forepeak, and are not yet out of the harbor. God knows whether we shall ever reach home. The



sailors are working at the pumps. I wanted the ship to be dry-docked at New York, but the owners would not allow it."

The letter was sent back by the pilot and the *St. Oswald* was never spoken again.

The wreck-tales are innumerable, and in all of them the especially interesting points are two — the dramatic interplay of the varying interests and natures of the men involved, and the extraordinary evidence of tremendous wind and sea in the case of ships that went ashore in hurricanes.

Mention was made of the steamer *State of Texas* which was lifted clear over the reef opposite Key West in the 1876 blow, and grounded in shoal water inside without injury. The same thing happened, in even more spectacular manner, to the *Culdoon*, barkentine, in 1901. She was loaded with lumber, drawing fourteen feet, and being driven over the reef at Turtle Rocks, was lifted over the highest part of that broad mass of coral, much of it awash at ordinary high water, *without touching*, and flung high on the soft marl of Old Rhodes Bank, totally uninjured. There the Commodore visited her, and her Captain pointed out with awe a ragged fringe of canvas along the foretopsail yard — all that was left of the sail. "It was a brand-new sail, mister," said he, "and it was furled when we came ashore, *with all the gaskets I could get on it* — but the wind got a little hold on one end of it and ripped them off like pack-thread." A bit of this wind-tortured fabric long hung in the Commodore's boathouse — a mere frazzled mop of cotton threads, depending from a strip of canvas so heavy and solid that one can scarcely imagine a wind that could injure it. The *Culdoon* was floated in good condition after the removal of her cargo; the latter was exceptionally fine Pensacola pine, and the Commodore bought some of it at the "wreck-sale" for the *Carib's* planking.

A picturesque, though trivial, incident occurred in





connection with the grounding of a Spanish steamer, the *Baldomero y Glesias*, on the reef, in 1889. In the interests of Merritt and Chapman the Commodore at once visited her, and, as usual, photographed her. This evoked such a storm of vituperation from her bridge as completely mystified him until it developed that her Captain expected to get her off, without assistance, on the next tide, and devoutly hoped that this might be done without witnesses, so that the grounding should remain a secret, and not discredit his record! As a matter of fact she was floated, quite easily, and went her way seemingly none the worse.

A skipper of a very different type was the commander of the schooner *Joseph B. Thomas*, which went ashore just below Fowey Rock light in 1909. He had been awake for two nights during the anxious approach to the Straits, and having picked up Fowey Rock on a clear day with no sea and mild wind, turned the ship over to his mate and dropped into his berth exhausted. She passed the Light close aboard, and within half a mile took bottom, gently, on the edge of the coral. How it could happen accidentally was a puzzle, and everyone's first thought was "another good boat murdered for her insurance." But in this case it proved that the Captain owned a considerable part of her, and that the insurance was far from adequate, and the poor man's grief and distress were amply evident in the next few days; we were forced to conclude that the deceptive colors and currents of the reef had tricked the mate. Before they could lay anchors to pull her off the mild swell had lifted and dropped her. There was twenty-five hundred tons of gravel inside (meant for the Key West railroad) and her bottom was crushed like an eggshell.

Her cargo, of course, did not interest the wreckers. They stripped her of saleable fittings, and a few weeks later at Miami the distracted skipper, looking as though he had not slept since the boat went ashore, saw all that was left of his fine, able vessel sell for a few hundred dol-

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lars. I bought her two bells; the smaller of them served *Wabun* as fog-bell, while the big "ship's bell" was mounted on the porch at Camp Biscayne and summoned its guests to many a good meal.

A small odd figure-head on the boathouse, and a bronze capstan-head used as a gong on the porch of the Barnacle, commemorate the schooner *Haroldine*, which went ashore off Bear's Cut on the lump now marked by the bell-buoy, loaded with stone for the Key West extension. Several years after this event, while the Commodore was sitting in his boathouse, his attention was called to two ladies in the path back of the back door, looking at the *Haroldine's* figure-head. To their inquiries as to where he got it, the Commodore replied, "Why, off a wreck. Vessel called the *Haroldine*." "Yes," replied the old lady. "This is my daughter who was a model for the carving of that figure-head, and I was the principal owner of the ship. I'm sorry to say I had very little insurance on her."

"Well, then," said the Commodore, "that accounts for the apathy of the Captain when I boarded her to offer assistance."

"No," she said, "I'm afraid he threw the vessel away, to get his share of the insurance, which was ample."

Then the unfortunate owner added, "I suppose you notice the peculiar hat that figure-head wears." As a matter of fact, the Captain had tried to divert the Commodore's anxiety for his wreck to interest in the figure-head at the time the latter first boarded the *Haroldine*. "That," the lady went on to explain, "is not as it was originally. The captain made a voyage to China and got the idea that the figure-head needed a hat, and he had a Chinaman carve one."

At the underwriter's auction the Commodore had bought the old wreck for \$7.50 in the hope of salvaging her four masts worth several thousands of dollars, but she broke up in a gale before they could be secured. He did get a steam windlass, a four-ton anchor and some other





things which he sent north only to have them permanently lost in the mud at the bottom of Jacksonville harbor when the wharf there caught fire and burned, together with the ship bearing all that was left of the *Haroldine*.

A tale which may be classed as a wreck story was the strange adventure of the negro, Edward Higgs, in the hurricane of 1906. When the easterly phase of this gale struck in he was anchored at Cape Florida in a small sloop, in company with several fishermen on a scow, and both dragged their anchors well out into the bay. There he cut away his mast to make himself as snug as possible, but with the reversal of the wind, and the accompanying bore, or violent backwash of the water driven into the bay by the first wind, both craft were driven across the banks after parting their cables, the sloop having her rudder smashed. Completely helpless, trying to steer with an oar over the stern, she was swept out through the terrific surf on the Cape Florida sandbores, the scow with her, into the maelstrom of the Stream. What such a combination means to a small boat few men have ever lived to describe, and Edward Higgs's vocabulary was quite unequal to the task. In the eddies at the edge of the Stream there is a choppy and uncomfortable sea at the best of times — no regular succession of rollers, but an incalculable, leaping mess, rather like the slopping of the water in a gigantic pail, violently shaken. What this was under the conditions of that day is hard to imagine. Certainly it was sufficiently horrifying, and doubtless Edward gave himself up for lost.

The observers from the Cape had no thought that he could survive, and when his wife heard the story she promptly assumed widow's weeds. The two helpless craft, neither of which would have been considered seaworthy under the most favorable conditions, disappeared quickly in the welter of foam and spindrift, and that seemed inevitably the end of the story.

Not so, however. As a matter of fact, both absurd craft



survived. The flat-boat scudded bravely into mid-stream and was there sighted by a steamer, which managed somehow to get her crew of fishermen off in safety. She then proceeded on her unguided way, and finally went ashore, uninjured, on South Bimini. Meanwhile Higgs worked a little farther north, survived the terrors of the Stream, just cleared Bimini, and proceeded across the Northwest Providence Channel to the west end of Great Bahama Island, where the battered little craft was quietly beached without further damage!

We may imagine that he took to shore in no mood to hurry back to sea. The little settlement of black spongers and fishermen must have been heaven to him, and the fact that it was completely out of touch with the rest of the world meant nothing so long as there was a bit of stable land and the requisite food and water. At all events, he settled down in very leisurely fashion to the job of rerigging his boat, consuming in the end nearly three months at the task, and by that time the terrors of the Stream must have faded a little, and the delights of home and family had grown more alluring. So he embarked and sailed back to Miami, to descend on his old associates as a veritable recrudescence of the half-forgotten past. He was just in time to protest against his wife's marriage to another man, and we may imagine that one of the most extraordinary results of that hurricane was the good woman's emotional adventures as wife and widow, through resignation and consolation, only to discover herself once more back where she started!

The subject of wrecking irresistibly suggests one of the most picturesque figures of the last century in Florida, Bradish Johnson, many years resident in Key West, where his principal occupation was wrecking. He was by no means a typical wrecker, however, his whole history, tradition and attitude toward the job being in complete contrast to those of the natives or Bahamans who had been doing most of the work.



Johnson, who had come to Key West almost unknown, was an incurable lover of adventure for its own sake. He was of a wealthy and fashionable Northern family, and graduated with honors at Annapolis. Entering the Navy in the stagnation following the Civil War, however, he soon had enough of its inactive life, and resigned, to build a schooner for seal and otter hunting in Alaskan waters and the Sea of Okhotsk. This being quite illegal, and carried on under the noses of two navies, one might suppose it would furnish enough excitement for a lifetime.

Apparently it palled, however, and he took to smuggling arms to Mexico, furnishing great assistance to Diaz in getting control of the Mexican Government. He rose to high office — and incidentally came within an ace of being hanged! Next he appeared on the Gulf coast of Florida running in the *Lizzie Henderson*, one of the ramshackle “90 day gunboats” of the Civil War. A little later, in a similar shaky craft, bought for some wrecking enterprise, he struck St. Augustine bar, went to pieces, and had to swim ashore.

Wrecking appealed to him immensely. Nowhere was greater opportunity for daring and prowess; nowhere could a man take greater chances, or reap greater rewards if successful, and he gravitated inevitably to Key West. He became at once notorious for ability and courage, which enabled him to undertake salvage contracts with the cheapest and most inadequate of equipment. He thus underbid everybody on so many jobs that he was dubbed “Hog” Johnson, and ever afterward universally so known. He especially loved to buy old boats, preferably such as had been condemned and could be bought for a song, and put them to strenuous service in wrecking work, which required knocking about the most dangerous parts of the reef, irrespective of weather, until the job in hand was done. And such were the rewards of audacity that he never seemed to have any trouble!

Personally he was a striking figure, of more than usual





height, and very good to look upon. Admiral Delano, then quartered at Camp Biscayne, in talking to the Commodore of Hawaii, spoke of a large official ball, where he recalled "the most striking and handsome man" he ever saw. He bewailed forgetting the name, as he had a persistent desire to see this exceptional personage again.

"I can tell you his name," the Commodore remarked. "It must have been Bradish Johnson."

"That's it, that's the name," agreed his amazed guest, but the Commodore was already adding to the information an offer to produce the man himself, as a telegram to Key West would bring him by the next boat.

Johnson's home in Key West was interesting and delightful. His wife and daughter were highly cultured, widely traveled and remarkably fine musicians. It is hard to imagine a greater contrast than that between such traditions and personality, such a home and family on one side, and on the other his chosen life of wild adventure in the company of the roughest and most reckless of men, from whom he was in frequent peril. His story is for another book than this, but any yarn of those days in Florida must include at least this much mention of him.

The Commodore's own wrecking experiences came to an end which is explained by the following letter from the president of the Merrick & Chapman Wrecking Co., with whom he had been pleasantly associated for so many years:

October 25, 1912.

R. M. MUNROE, ESQ.,  
Coconut Grove, Florida.

*Dear Sir:*

We have received your letter of the 22nd instant, and are much pained to hear that your health is not robust, and that you feel as if you must withdraw from our service on that account.

The many years that we have called you our agent has made us feel that you are really one of us, and we are not disposed to let you off so easily.



We think that probably you will have no trouble in selecting some man in your vicinity who could look actively after any work that might come in your district for us, and would like to have you make such an arrangement; we still recognizing you as our representative and transacting business through you.

Again expressing our regret at your poor health, we are

Yours very truly,

MERRITT & CHAPMAN DERRICK AND WRECKING CO.

I. J. MERRITT, *Pres.*

Relinquishing this responsibility, however, was by no means the conclusion of the Commodore's tremendously varied activities; to this day he follows with interest all the commercial and pleasure interests of the younger generation on the South Florida coast.





## VII

### TREASURE

UNAVOIDABLY linked with tropical seas, coral reefs, the Gulf Stream and the trade wind, are treasure and treasure-hunting. Florida's lonely and unknown coasts, so lately pirate haunted, are ideal places for buried bullion, and they have not lacked attention as such. Nor can we blame the romantic boys and others who believe these tales, for the actual existence of treasure has been so often proven that it seems reasonable to think the facts even exceed the stories!

Near Coconut Grove itself was the case of Mr. E. C. Cole. In trenching at the foot of the rocky bluffs on his property he came on some rotted and burned timbers, and among them a small mass of melted metal which proved to be mixed gold and silver, of considerable value. It was evidently coin which had been secreted on a small vessel driven ashore in a hurricane (as she lay several feet above ordinary high tide, and two hundred yards from the shore) and afterward burned. This find led him to name his place, and also a new boat then building, "Treasure Trove."

Wide interest was excited in the early days of the Bay by a report that "old man Brown," beachcomber, had found a fortune. He was an early settler who had a small and solitary house on New River Sound, not far from the south end. Walking the beach after a severe hurricane he found two bars of metal exposed by the cutting away of the sand, which he took to be lead. Shortly after, in Key West, he sold them as lead, and very soon after heard that they were really silver! Hastening back to New River, he found that the surf had already covered the spot with sand so deeply that he could find nothing more.



For many years there were frequent attempts to find the timbers of this wreck again, without success. Every spring the boys — Dick Carney, Harry Peacock and others — would go to New River turtling, making a grand lark of the affair, and staying a month or more. There was a small canal, cut during the Seminole War, between New River and Hillsboro, by which they could go quite near to Hillsboro Rocks, where Brown was said to have picked up his bars, and of course a considerable amount of the turtlers' time was spent in that neighborhood! At last Jennings — a Carolinian, who had started an extensive planting of tomatoes, with contract labor, south of Coconut Grove — became so much interested in this quest that he offered to finance a more carefully planned effort.

A company was formed and incorporated in order to insure exclusive rights to what might be found, and for a few shares of stock the Commodore designed a caisson whereby the wreck might be uncovered when found. The whole affair got into the papers, with a solid page in the New York Sunday "Herald," which rather annoyed Jennings. The Commodore told him, jokingly, that this was a "wonderful opportunity. Nothing attracts the public so much as treasure, and if you were mean enough you could make a fortune by selling this stock." He took it half seriously, and answered with great indignation, "Well, I might be a gambler and a blackleg — but I wouldn't do *that*," and the Commodore could only answer heartily, "Bully for you!"

They went at the search with determination, eventually got on the timbers of the wreck, and actually found some curiosities and a few coins, but never recovered anything of substantial value. In the course of the search they discovered the remains of an old privateer, surrounded by cast-iron guns. Several of these were recovered, and mounted as decorations in the lake-front sea-wall of the Clarke property at Palm Beach, which now occupies the



site of "Cap" Dimmick's old hotel, the Coconut Grove House.

Ned Pent, former Merritt Wrecking Co. pilot, among his many picturesque adventures, once stumbled on a "treasure-chest" in the bay-front mangroves below the Hunting Grounds, now Cutler. He and some others came into the boathouse to announce the find, exhibiting several Mexican "pillar" dollars (so called because of two columns which were part of the design) and saying he had a "bunch" of them. They were badly corroded, the sulphureted gas in the seaweed having turned them into sulphide of silver on the surface; there was a crumbling mass of perhaps a quarter to a half peck, much of it already sulphide. Part of this might have been restored by proper chemical treatment, but they knew nothing of that, and nearly all of it was lost. The coins were presumably part of the contents of a captain's chest.

Somewhat similar was the find made by young Don Collar, who, with his older brother and mother, recently arrived from Ohio, were given rooms in the second floor of the Factory one winter to help them to a new start. The small boy, about ten, had little to do but explore this fascinating new region, and wandered alongshore all day. One evening he brought the Commodore some "funny things" he had found on the Ransom School grounds, under a recently uprooted buttonwood tree. They were evidently parts of an old sextant, and on careful search nearly all of it was recovered except the steel parts, and bits of the mahogany case. The handle, of cocobolo or ebony, was scorched, and the German silver of the frame seemed to have been melted. There was a telescope through which it was still possible to see a little, and all the fittings and accompaniments of an apparently modern sextant. Other small articles indicated that it had come ashore in a sea-chest, which was buried about a foot deep.

A story has persisted that the guns from the British





frigate *Fowey* which was wrecked on Fowey Reef, and for which the reef and light are named, are still there.

The legends of treasure found by *somebody else* are, of course, innumerable and proportionately meaningless, but now and then one of them is so circumstantial and straightforward as to be interesting. Such was the tale reported not long ago in the Palm Beach "Times" of a schooner which ran in at Jupiter Inlet and landed a party with surveying instruments in the mangroves to the northward. After a day or two of work, running lines and digging, they were seen to drag out a large chest, take it aboard, run out the inlet and sail straight away eastward. At the site of their labors was found a hole eleven feet deep, and not far off in the woods, crumbled away and overgrown, a small wooden building which no one had ever suspected before.

Another tale, not unlike this, was of the schooner that hovered about Gun Cay for three days, until a cloudy night enabled them to work near the lighthouse unobserved. In the morning they were gone, leaving an open trench near which were scattered fragments of an old chest, and a few coins.

One of the Commodore's long-time neighbors on Staten Island, Peter Wandel, the blacksmith, had an irresistible love of the sea, and often wanted the Commodore to go with him on one enterprise or another. Finally he had the Poillions build him the schooner *Hattie Haskell*, and put her into the West Indian fruit trade — but his mind was really centered on treasure, and he thereafter frequently came to the Commodore with some tale, chart or scheme which seemed to point the way to buried gold; none of them, it need hardly be said, appealed to the Commodore's solid common sense. One of these trips was to be insured against total financial loss by planning for a return load of guano from the Morant Cays, Cuba, in case the treasure was not forthcoming.

The next news the Commodore had, presumably of



Peter Wandel, was that a schooner had been libeled by her crew, for their wages, in Key West, and the owners mentioned in the action were men well-known in financial New York! Wandel had persuaded a group of Wall Street men to finance a treasure-hunt in Honduras, and sold them the boat so that his own name did not appear.

We have been so often assured that the buried treasure story is the greatest and wildest form of fiction that the very name of treasure has become synonymous with fraud and fake, and it is easy to forget that tremendous quantities of precious metal have actually been hidden and lost, and still await their finders. The difficulty is that the earth is after all so many times bigger than the treasure! Nevertheless, once in a while, people have chanced upon it, and will again, and while it can hardly be recommended as a business, treasure-hunting has many points as an amusement.





## VIII

### CAMP BISCAYNE

ABOUT 1900 the illness of both Mr. and Mrs. Peacock decided them to give up the inn; their son Alf ran it for a time, but his forte was not hotel-keeping, and it was soon sold to a Mr. Sneider, who proved himself a thoroughly disagreeable neighbor. He put the crown to this by discovering that the riparian rights to the old Beasley tract had not been mentioned in the grant, whereupon he "bought" them in some way, and tried to sell them to the various owners of the land, at a high price. As these owners had been in undisputed possession and enjoyment of the rights for a generation (as proved, in part, by the Commodore's photos of early wharves), the courts held that the rights went with the land, and Sneider was "out" whatever he had paid for them, besides incurring the hearty hatred of the neighborhood.

Fortunately he had been no more popular as a hotel manager, and was soon ready to sell out. This he did to Mr. John M. Hopkins, a former master in the Adirondack-Florida School, who saw an opening for a second school of somewhat similar plan (that is, the migratory plan, with fall and spring terms in the North and the winter term in Florida). He made his Northern headquarters near Lake Placid, New York, and the institution was active and successful for twenty years under the name of the "Lake Placid School."

Thus Coconut Grove was left without a public stopping place, and it looked as though something had to be done. The first of the beautiful houses which are now dubbed "Millionaires' Row" (though few of its residents are entitled to or wish for such distinction) were then under con-



struction, and their owners naturally did not wish to see Coconut Grove develop into a tourist center. The Commodore thoroughly agreed with this, but still very much felt the lack of a small and quiet house of entertainment. A simple establishment more like a boarding-house or camp, than a hotel, furnishing comfortable rooms, clean and wholesome food and very little more, could scarcely offend the owners of the big homes, and might be a convenience to them for overflow guests. Incidentally this ought to be profitable, but that was secondary. Too many of the Commodore's old friends naturally turned to him to learn of a substitute for the Peacock Inn to be disregarded; moreover, if they were forced to find winter quarters elsewhere, he must lose many of his most delightful personal contacts.

So in the fall of 1903 a sort of "coöperative kitchen" was established in the old "house of the *Three Sisters*," behind the Barnacle, with Miss Josephine Wirth, Mrs. Munroe's sister, in charge. There assembled for meals the Strongs, Crocketts and Hines, eight in all, besides the Munroes. Of these only the Strongs were housed in what was to be Camp Biscayne, in the first house constructed there. The Crocketts lived in the McCormick cottage next to the former Peacock Inn, and the Hines lived in the small waterfront house on their property, now Gardner's, north of the Barnacle.

The next year the "old dining room" of the Camp was built, containing then merely dining room, kitchen and rooms for the managers, and the two Misses Baxter took charge, a few extra guests being housed in tents.

The following summer, 1905, saw four cottages built, under the superintendence of Ned Hine, the Hines being in partnership with the Commodore in the budding enterprise. In the fall the Camp opened under the management of Miss Parrott, with six buildings, and had a busy and successful year.

For the next three seasons Mrs. John Oakley had



charge, and the "Bamboo House" — a separate library and reading room, covered outside with bamboo from the Commodore's lawn — was built, as well as the laundry. Next Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Benton took hold, for three seasons, down to the spring of 1912, and during their term the "new Lodge" was built, with ample kitchen, dining room, offices and a number of guest rooms.

In 1913 the Camp found a permanent manager in Mr. William Crear of New York, who, with Mrs. Crear and young "Bill," was a familiar figure in the Grove for the next fourteen years. Under their energetic and capable management the increasing capacity of the Camp, augmented occasionally by rooms rented in the neighborhood, became a worth-while business. There were finally eleven cottages, besides the Lodge.

No profits were ever taken out of the business by the promoters, all being returned to the property in improvements and maintenance, chiefly new cottages. The Camp area had been increased by the addition of the Walter Browne property to the southwest, which Ned Hine took in exchange for the lot north of the Barnacle, afterward sold to Gardner. Not long after this it became evident that Mr. Hine would not be able to take an active part in the management and in the end the Commodore took over the entire Camp property. This was no financial privilege at the time — in fact, he regretted the additional investment and responsibility — but it was to prove a fortunate move for him in the end.

It was intended that Camp Biscayne should be a permanent institution, developing on the simple lines of its foundation, and growing in value at least sufficiently to justify the improvements put on it. But the increasingly rapid growth of Miami and the country about it upset all calculations. Along with the simplicity of equipment, food and service, one basic principle of the Camp was to be moderate rates, and \$17 was adopted and for many years maintained as a maximum weekly rate, with





no "extras." Alas for those happy days! War times made it evident that charges must go up, and the three, four and five dollar a day marks were passed in turn without lessening the popularity of the Camp among its growing list of habitués. The "flush" years of delirious prosperity following the war started the first breath-taking surges of the great Florida boom, with rapidly increased assessments, growing tax-rates, and other extraordinary expenses. At the same time, hotel guests became progressively less content with simplicity, and before very long it was evident that a cottage-camp could not afford to occupy this tract. Furthermore, in view of this, every additional building was so much dead loss in case of sale; the new values accrued to the land alone, not to the buildings. At the same time the physical care of the buildings and furniture, and the planning and building of additional cottages, made a year-round task for the Commodore which was increasingly burdensome.

So when the big boom brought an offer which represented many thousand times the value put on this land in 1877, it was accepted. The Commodore of course regretted to see the Camp go. All the considerations which led to its founding still held good, and he has been hard put to it to justify the sale to many good friends who can no longer find bed and board in the Grove; but he really had no choice.

In a few months the cottages were removed or destroyed, the old forest which had been carefully preserved was cleared away to make a tremendous "boulevard" from the county road to the bay, the Factory and the old Browne boathouse were torn down, the Yacht Club House lightered away to Coral Gables, and the bay-front filled in by dredge to a point fifty feet or so beyond the end of the old wharf. It was a startling transformation — all, no doubt on the lines of necessary and desirable progress; but it often takes time for such radical changes to demonstrate their beauty and justify them-



selves to those who have known and loved the scene of them for many years.

Camp Biscayne not only housed many old friends of the Commodore, but as in the case of the yacht-designing, brought many new ones. The business of the Camp brought him in direct contact with almost every guest, for throughout the season from the first of December to the middle of April his day began with a brief tour of inspection, which made the excuse for many a pleasant chat. Incidentally it led to an everlasting succession of petty repairs, alterations and additions, which at times absorbed most of his time and energy. At such periods the whole Camp plan lost its charm, and sometimes the Commodore could have wished himself well out of it; but on the whole he was glad to pay that price for the many delightful associations it brought.

The "December to April season" mentioned above was one of the remarkable features of Camp Biscayne. Since many of those who most appreciated the region wished to come earlier or stay later than the usual six weeks' hotel "season," the Commodore planned from the beginning that the Camp should stay open through the period of cold weather in New York, and especially encourage those who would stay through the winter. With this in view the minimum period for the reservation of a cottage was set at ten weeks, and eventually the typical guest was rather a resident than a visitor to the Bay.

Botany was naturally a general interest in this sub-tropical nook, and it was encouraged at Camp Biscayne by preserving good specimens of all the trees and shrubs that grew in the hammock about the buildings — all strange to Northern eyes — labeling them and printing lists in the Camp circulars; there were forty-three species on the grounds. Each cottage was named for some especially fine near-by tree — Wildwood, Orchid, Live-oak, Mastic, Banyan, Baywood, Palmetto, Pine-tree, Button-





wood, and so forth, and many were the botanical excursions and discussions. Wildwood Cottage, the first on the grounds, built in 1903 for Mr. and Mrs. John R. Strong, after several years went to Mr. Addison Van Name, former librarian at Yale — a most widely read and delightful gentleman. He and his charming wife enjoyed long seasons for the climate and the quiet Camp routine throughout their lives, while their daughter, Theodora, was an unfailingly enthusiastic cruiser and canoeist and a well-informed sub-tropical botanist.

The Commodore was always especially interested in the native forest, which had worked out its life problem and established itself as the legitimate occupant of the land. Almost all the settlers of the country, from the beginning, condemned the hammock growths, and destroyed them as fast as possible — the planters because they stood in the way of cultivation, the cottagers because many of the trees were low and small compared to Northern trees. So the almost universal custom was to clear the ground of the “scrubby” woods, and start all over again by planting coconuts, royal and Washingtonian palms, hibiscus, alamanda, bougainvillæa, and other showy things, and thus build up an artificial landscape garden.

The Commodore, on the contrary, sedulously preserved the original hammock between the road and the Barnacle, cutting out a winding driveway barely wide enough for one vehicle, so that the woods remained practically unchanged in appearance. This was no encouragement to speeding autos, when they came into use, and has occasioned a good deal of remonstrance, and at times abuse, from those who cut corners too fast and too close; but the more it interfered with “rapid transit,” at least in that spot, the better it pleased the Commodore. It is now almost unique as a specimen of the original woodland within the limits of Miami, and it has attracted a great deal of attention as such.

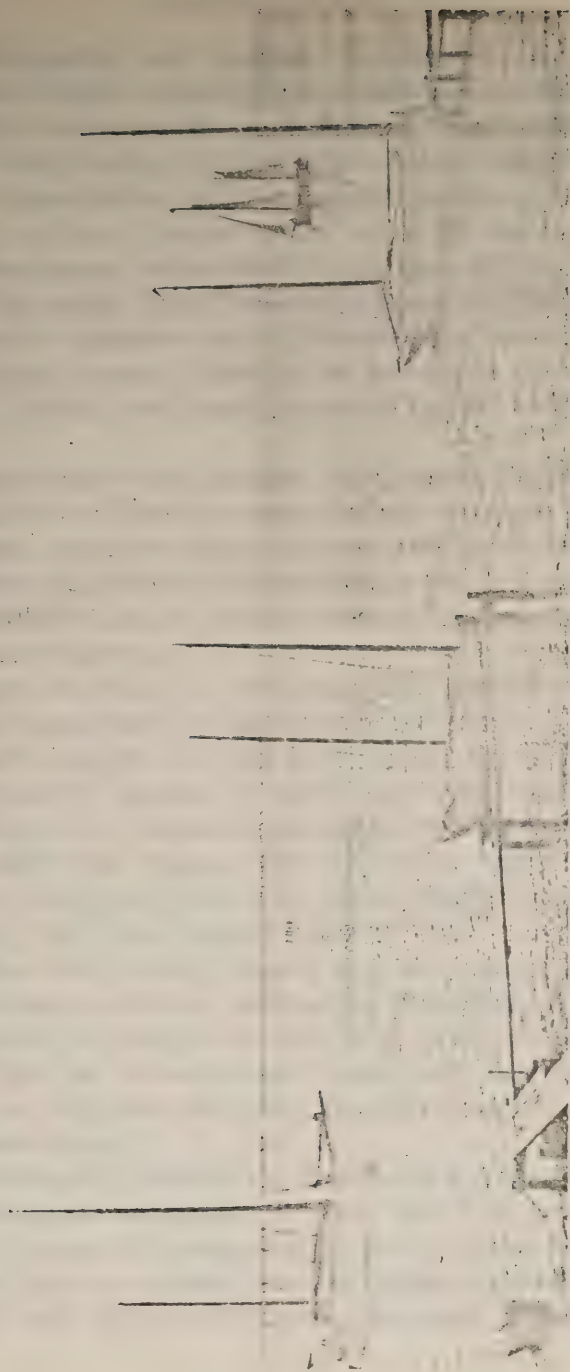


It would be tedious to name all the good friends which the Camp brought to the Commodore, and doubtless it is an invidious task to select — nevertheless, it is scarcely possible to speak of the Camp without mentioning a few. One of the first family cottages, "Mastic," was built in 1905 for A. B. Gardner of Dowagiac, Michigan, brought to the Grove by the Ransom School, in which his two boys were students. After a few years they took over the Hine property north of the Barnacle and built a comfortable home there.

A picturesque figure in the early days of the Camp, and a regular visitor for many years, was John Hunter, of New York, friend of Pierre Lorillard, F. G. Griswold, and other noted men of sporting tastes. He was from the old Hunter family which gave its name to Hunter's Island, up toward New Rochelle. He had been a great horseman, but devoted his later years almost exclusively to bonefishing, in which there was excellent sport on the weedy flats which made their feeding grounds, especially in the lower bay. He had the name of a recluse, insisted on a small table alone in the dining room, and carefully avoided the diversions and interests of the other guests, but was always scrupulously courteous, and a most interesting talker, when so disposed.

Among later visitors William Meigs, of Philadelphia, was especially interesting. His introduction to the Bay was in 1891 when he and others cruised the coast in Strobhar's schooner *Rambler* — the same vessel in which Dr. Henshall had visited the Commodore's camp on the Miami in 1881. For some time after that he spent the winters on a houseboat on the Kissimmee River shooting and fishing; later he came regularly to the Camp for many years. He and Thomas Hine and a few other contemporaries spent most of their time in and around the Commodore's boathouse, where shade and wind and the varied interests of the waterfront combined to provide the greatest comfort and amusement about the Grove.





OLD COCONUT GROVE ANCHORAGE PROTECTED BY THE SIGNAL WHICH "PRESTO" IS CROSSING

*Presto  
Nickelli*

*Egypt*

*Nethla*





They frequently had nominal justification for their presence in some tinkering job which needed the tools and work-bench, but the real object of their gatherings was the never-ending flow of talk — jokes, tales, memories and speculations, often suggested by the job of the moment, or some feature of the water-life on the Bay, which was spread before them in an ever shifting panorama. This group (very likely from sundry reflections on Mr. Meigs's character as a "Philadelphia lawyer" and the resulting retorts) came to be known as the "Safe-blowers' Union," and surely never a "Local" held jollier sessions.

For some years the families of Admiral Delano and Admiral Albert Ross gave an officially nautical tone to the Camp. Another marine flavor came from Mr. and Mrs. Henry R. Mallory; he was former business manager of the Mallory Line, on whose boats the Commodore had made many voyages.

Though not living at the Camp, Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Poole and daughter Lois should be included in this group. They early bought the land south of the Barnacle from de Hedouville, planted it with fruit and ornamental trees, and built a second small cottage to supplement de Hedouville's tiny house. This was their winter headquarters throughout their lives, since which their kindly friendship has been greatly missed. Their early water excursions were mainly fishing trips on a large power-dory, *Tarpon*, under the guidance of their faithful darky, Dan. Later they bought an able little ketch, rebuilt and refitted her as a comfortable auxiliary, renamed her *Nancy Lee*, and were for years familiar members of the short fleet cruises.

It is extremely difficult for those who knew and loved Camp Biscayne to accept the fact that it is gone. For nearly a quarter of a century it played an important part in many lives — a winter home of unique simplicity and comfort, with the most delightful personal associations.



The building-lot development, instituted by its new owners, including the filling in of swamp and bay far out into the old harbor, was arrested after the Camp was completely destroyed, and before any new houses had been built, by the breaking of the boom.





## IX

### JOYS OF LIFE

CAMP BISCAYNE covered the period of my most vivid memories of Biscayne Bay and the life centering on Commodore Munroe — and all the interests of the region seem naturally to revolve about him. Certainly he is one of the chief joys of life on the Bay.

In the first place, in a land where both business and pleasure are commonly concerned with boats and the sea, he is the unquestioned leader in every maritime interest. He is a sailor of incomparable ability and sound judgment, with an experience far broader than anyone else in the region, and the disciples who have absorbed from him all that they know of the finer points of boat-handling are legion. To see him at the wheel of any boat is to see a perfect demonstration of finished, unostentatious skill. Under his touch boats behave like spirited horses in the hands of a beloved master, eager to do the most difficult bidding, and ready to show astonishing speed on demand.

Many a time on joint cruises when he was loafing carelessly along in *Melody*, I have sneaked up behind him in *Wabun* and managed for a time to overhaul him, up to the moment when he noticed that competition was threatened. Then he would rise from the bench, and standing at the wheel, glance to windward and at *Wabun*, trim his sails quickly but with uncanny skill — and in ten minutes *Wabun* would be well in the rear, and the Commodore would take his seat again! Even though *Wabun* was really the faster boat, it was only a few times in many years that I succeeded in keeping ahead.

Like Captain Jim Stillwell of old Staten Island times, the Commodore's knowledge of shoals, tides and currents



is amazing, and his judgment of weather equally so, and it is always a treat to see him apply them to the recurring problems of the boats, which are often a sad puzzle to many of us, but which seem for him to melt into insignificance.

It is not without meaning that the life of Coconut Grove centers in the boathouse workshop, for the Commodore is a fine mechanic, and all the ingenuity and skill inherited from engineering forebears and developed by a life of mechanical experiment, topped by the yacht-designing which involves a knowledge of all trades, has been generously put at the disposal of his friends, while tools and supplies for all manner of work are to be found in the shop.

He was, for example, a complete good angel to me in connection with *Wabun*. He negotiated her purchase, he had her hauled out for examination on his own marine railway at the Factory, he designed a new suit of sails for her ("so that you can beat *Melody*," as he said) and later saw her through a complete overhauling. In all of this he not only gave me the great benefit of his especial skill, but saved me large sums which would have been paid to any other adviser. He provided an anchorage, he directed me in the purchase of chain and mooring, he gave me his lighter and dredging tongs to lay it, and when I had trouble in the digging, he came and dug himself. He provided storage for the rig and furniture when the boat was laid up — in short, he assumed full responsibility for the care of *Wabun*. And my experience is that of all his many friends — is it any wonder they love him?

He inevitably became the natural source of good counsel to all who settled in Coconut Grove, not only in boating matters, but on all phases of bay life. As time went on many wealthy and prominent men were drawn to the region, and nearly all of them sooner or later consulted him and became his friends and admirers. Their feelings are well voiced by Dr. R. H. Baekeland, noted



chemical engineer, when he said, "For eleven years I came to Miami in my boat, and wanted to see Coconut Grove, but they always told me it was too shallow. Then at last I came, and found the Commodore. Just *think* of those wasted years!"

In these friends, as I have said, wealth, class and condition meant nothing. One of them was a "contract laborer" not only illiterate, but lacking even the most elementary ethics — literally not instructed in the rights of property or the virtues of truth. But the Commodore saw basic good in him, became his friend, quietly imparted the needed social virtues, and produced a first-class citizen, successful and honored. Another was a multimillionaire, whose great winter palace on its huge and elaborate estate is one of the extravagant sights of Miami. Isolated though he was from many by the somewhat overawing radiance that seems to hedge the very rich, he welcomed the Commodore's friendship, and valued his advice. After his death the Commodore wrote, "They called him austere, unfriendly; he was never so to me." Seldom in any community can there have been a citizen so often appealed to, so generally admired, so universally respected, as Commodore Munroe.

Certainly Camp Biscayne looked to him as a matter of course, not only for its practical welfare, but often for its amusements as well. Probably most prized of these was a day on the *Melody* — always a good sail, often some special interest suggested by the Commodore's long knowledge of the bay. A trip out Bear's Cut and back by Cape Florida, or out at the Cape and in at Soldier Key, or down to the Ragged Keys and back, or to Fowey Rock light, made a splendid outdoor day, full of interest, but unhurried. We were sure of clear sky, good breezes, the proper tides, a moon if desired, and all other favorable conditions — the Commodore had been so long in the game that he selected the right days, and avoided any of the rare irregularities of weather, with uncanny





skill. In fact, his excursions were so uniformly favored in this respect that he came to be regarded not only as a predictor, but an arbiter of the weather. Among the mementoes in his desk is the following document, signed by nine of the feminine guests of Camp Biscayne and presented at the end of an unusually long period of cool weather:

*To His Eminence, the August Wind and Rain Compeller of Biscayne Bay and adjoining waters, the Honorable, the Commodore Munroe:*

GREETING:

We of the gentler sex now sojourning along the shores of your Biscayne Bay, whose names are hereunto appended as an earnest of their unbounded confidence in your wonderful control of the elements, do humbly and respectfully call the attention of your illustrious Eminence to the more than good and lawful measure of Northern Winds which we are continually obliged to endure, and do humbly pray that you will drive away these rude and chilling blasts, and give us the soft and balmy airs for which your land is so famous, that we have come so far to enjoy,

And, granting this, your petitioners will ever pray, etc.

The Commodore will not commit himself as to whether the ladies thereafter were chilled or "balméd."

A favorite short excursion was a swimming party to Cocoplum Beach, where clear salt water and a firm bottom made a delightful playground. The guests would dress in the cabin en route, and the boat would anchor in a comfortable depth of crystal water, with a long ladder over the side, and life-buoys, small boats and other aids to aquatic fun at hand.

One of the interesting days often enjoyed by us at the Camp, but unknown to the tourist, was a "banking trip." This meant exploring some part of the vast expanse of low banks of marl, coral and weed which separate Biscayne Bay from the Hawk Channel in the ten or twelve miles between Cape Florida and the Ragged Keys. They are from one to two miles wide, cut into many parts by deep, tide-scoured channels from Bay to sea, many of



them navigable, and diversified by many pools and a wide variety of bottom. Parts of them are nearly dry at low water, when one may comfortably wade over them literally for miles, and find new beauties and curiosities at every step in the incredibly rich assortment of plant and animal life which covers and penetrates them. The Commodore once told me that in his forty years of life in the region, he had never set foot on these banks without finding some interesting plant or animal previously unknown to him.

The dull gray-brown expanse of the flats was not alluring at first glance, nor was the pungent fishy smell of them; neither were they comfortable to walk upon, being disconcertingly soft, and full of mysterious and uncomfortable things to tread on. There were always exclamations of dismay from novices, but they turned into cries of wonder and admiration when the marvelous complexity of life began to reveal itself. As the party scattered, rather weirdly clad in bathing suits, with tough wading shoes, heavy stockings and large sun-hats, and equipped with water-glasses, and short grains, gaff-hook or similar instrument to poke about with, it would be the larger items that first attracted attention. Someone would find a huge pink conch, awkwardly jerking himself along; it is always astonishing to see these heavy things "crawling," and the colors of the live shell, fresh from the water, are a revelation of delicate richness — softly blended pink and yellow, rose and pearl, of which only a dull remnant shows in the specimens preserved for exhibition. Next would come a shapeless lump, the size of a man's head, half-buried among the short turtle-grass and dusted gray with silt — a sponge, one of fifty nondescript and useless sorts. Empty and dull as it looked outside, once uprooted it would reveal a teeming mass of lively creatures sheltering beneath it, between its many divisions and within its very substance, in the water-circulating canals through which the sponge "breathes." Small crabs,





strangely and beautifully colored for concealment, myriads of baby shrimps, many of the odd and very delicate "brittle stars," curiously walking on their long threadlike points, which they so readily break off when caught, tiny sluggish fish of the strangest shapes and colors, pathetically helpless away from their accustomed shelter, huge worms, some like immense flat earthworms, strangely fitted with hairlike claws down each side, some like six-inch caterpillars, wonderfully plumed and colored, tiny shellfish, barnacles, bits of coral — all drip, as it were, out of the uprooted sponge, and scuttle away for new shelter as best they may.

Every step in the oozy whitish marl, held into some consistency by the all pervasive turtle-grass and its roots, encounters the small brittle corals of many species, some very delicately beautiful. Here and there are beds of what seem corals, but are really the lime-encrusted leaves of the calcareous algæ, in great bunches somewhat like white lilac blossoms; these are full of microscopic spicules of lime which affect the skin of the intruder somewhat as would a mild poison — hence the stockings! In the pools are sea-fans and feathers, the gorgonias, half plant, half animal, of brilliant purple and pungent odor, as well as a multitude of brown and feathery weeds, and many similar growths, branching like trees and waving in the current, which are not weeds at all, but flexible corals. Here, too, are sea-cucumbers (*bêche-de-mèr*) and sea-pigeons, a delicately mottled light-green squid, which throws out a lovely purple ink.

Gradually the water-glasses, then the dinghy, then the decks of the yacht are filled with specimens, the waders tire, the sun grows hot, the tide begins to rise, and the party assembles for lunch and a siesta beneath the awnings, with no sound but a distant and plaintive gull, and the ripple of the incoming tide. Then perhaps a crawfish hunt in the pockets along the edge of the bank, a swim in the nearest deep pool of warm and brilliant crystal, and a



quiet and lovely sail home toward the lowering sun, the sky a checkerboard of brilliant cloud-flecks — red and green and gold and blue. They were good days; and they might be repeated indefinitely, since each section of the great banks differed from the others and offered new interests.

More strenuous — and apt to be more predominately masculine — were the fishing parties, very often for kingfish, which meant a fairly lively day off the Cape, in comparatively shoal but very unsheltered water. Among other souvenirs is a “pome” from which we may quote:

The Commodore sure had a mixed up crew,  
A Yale professor and an admiral, too,  
Then came a wholesale paper man  
And a Captain who works for Uncle Sam.

Each had a lunch and a fishing line,  
And vowed and declared, if the day was fine  
That there'd be less fish in the seething brine!

But the day was rough, and one by one the company surrendered until finally:

We sailed away 'round Fowey Rocks,  
The *Melody* got some terrible knocks,  
And the Admiral, — well, he threw up his socks!  
But in spite of all this, not a fish in the box!

Delightful as such days were, it is the cruises which lie most warmly in my memory, and in the Commodore's also, I am sure. How many good week-ends *Melody* and *Wabun* spent together, knocking about the Bay and the banks, ranging as far as the Ragged Keys, or Cæsar's Creek, or Angelfish, or even Garden Cove, outside the middle of Key Largo. During the schooldays of Patty and Wirth such trips were about the limit for the Commodore; we would make our preparations on Friday, and in the afternoon sit on board, with sail set, all ready to cast off, until the youngsters arrived from school. If the breeze served to get us to the Featherbed Banks,



halfway down the bay, before dark, we could run the rest of the Bay during the evening, even without the moon, and have two clear days below the Bay. If we were delayed, we could, nevertheless, always make a start on Friday, however late; if we could not get farther away, we would run in onto the banks near Soldier Key where there were pools well sheltered by the shoals — a fascinating anchorage, almost out of sight of land, with a fine sense of distance and strangeness, though not much over an hour's sail from our moorings.

Number 3 Ragged Key was a frequent anchorage, with its tide-swept crawfish holes, its rich and varied bottom growth, and its incredibly rough weathered rock beach. The north bight of Sand's Key gave even calmer shelter, with access to a good beach on the east, and some fine mahogany trees in the hammock. We sometimes, too, lay south of it, in the entrance to Sand's Cut, or under the lee of Black Point, near Cæsar's Creek. In the latter, under the corner of Meig's Key, we all dropped hook many a time, to visit Pahson Jones, and every eddy of the complex tides in that winding channel was as familiar to the Commodore as his own library rug.

Once in a long while a real cruise could be engineered — something that involved hunting out strange charts, and laying in a real stock of provisions! These were great times, and long to be remembered. One such, in the spring of 1913, took *Melody* and *Wabun* to Key West by the strange and very interesting route over the flats between Big Pine Key and Key West — almost never traversed. It was shoal and tortuous, of course, but it took us to a number of new and interesting anchorages, especially along the edge of the Gulf of Mexico. It was a lonely route, with scarce a boat in sight, and still is so, despite the crowds that have since overwhelmed Florida. There were great expanses of shallow bank, haunted by innumerable herons, great and small, besides the usual hordes of pelicans, gulls, cormorants and bosun-birds.





Into these ran small tide-cut inlets, scarcely big enough for our two boats, but once entered giving excellent shelter. Here and there were scattered mangrove keys, usually with no dry land at all, which served only as landmarks and bird-roosts. It was a great empty expanse, with all the fascinations of loneliness and mystery.

Garden Cove on Key Largo, was a favorite anchorage, with the good fruit and interesting people of the key, the labyrinth of tide-creeks winding through the mangroves into the broad expanse of Largo Sound to the south, and the endless riches of the Reef to the east, where Carysfort spreads out its miles of coral and sponge, weeds and fish for the delight of the cruiser — a real undersea fairyland of infinite variety and brilliance. Here are eighty kinds of coral, ranging in size from great brain corals of ten feet diameter down to tiny formless patches on the flanks of the larger growths, and nearly as many sponges, equally various in size and color, some of the loggerheads being several feet across, and so solid that I have seen heavy boats grounded on them, with difficulty in getting off. These great sponges have no commercial value, except perhaps as fertilizer, and little beauty, but the smaller kinds show a great variety of shapes and colors, and are an interesting element of the "waterscape," while all of them furnish shelter to a myriad of small fish and other living things. The fish themselves are perhaps most spectacular of all, so grotesque in shape, and so amazingly and rudely brilliant in color. Here the blue parrot-fish darts from his covert like a flash of light-blue flame, and his heavier cousins nose the coral, with their stripes of purple, green and black; hordes of angelfish trail their sweeping draperies in colors painters might envy; and the sinuous moray eel eyes the intruder maliciously, his broad body, with its great fins above and below, waving in the water like a silken scarf in the breeze. Unquestionably this great reef is one of the most marvelous features of Florida, and



must one day be recognized as a primary attraction to visitors.

Angelfish Creek was a favorite objective of the shorter cruises — then less crowded with luxurious houseboats and cruisers than of late, and far more attractive. Our usual anchorage was in Card Sound, toward Pumpkin Key, and we spent many a day threading the narrow branches of the stream through the glossy mangroves, and fishing in the rocky pools at their outer ends.

But this list of happily remembered places is long enough, easy as it would be to extend it indefinitely, for the whole coast of Florida is full of interest to the shoal-draft yachtsman. Nor need I further list the endless routes and objectives open to the Biscayne Bay cruiser; in all directions new interests lie open to him. And while, in these latter years, the Commodore did less exploring on his own account, perhaps, his exhaustive knowledge of the country gave many of the Camp guests uniquely interesting days, especially planned for their individual tastes and wishes.

It is possible that I overemphasize the outdoor side of Camp Biscayne life. There were many among the guests of quiet habit, to whom the delights of the climate, the comfort of the cottages, the homelike meals, the pleasant passing chat with friends, and an occasional game of bridge or a walk to the bay-front, filled the days to complete satisfaction. These, as well as the more active members, owed their good times to the Commodore's simple tastes and kindly thoughtfulness, and they must regret the passing of Camp Biscayne as keenly as do the water-lovers.





## X

1914

THIS year, so ominous to the world in retrospect, brought first of all to the Commodore a New England cruise which was a great joy to all concerned. Mr. Bancroft Davis's new boat, *Tramp*, was building in Pendleton's yard at Wiscasset, Maine, and finding the Commodore interested in a northern cruise, Mr. Davis begged him take the boat on completion, try her out thoroughly, suggesting any changes which seemed advisable, and leave her where he chose on the coast, to be taken south in the fall.

The immediate result of this proposition was the Commodore's invitation to my mother and me to join forces with his family, and a bright day in late July saw us all foregathered at Wiscasset. Six in all, we seemed a large complement for the *Tramp*, but as we carried no paid hand, Wirth and I had comfortable quarters forward, and we were all well housed.

It would be easy to make a long story of the cruise that followed, so rich was it in both nautical and personal interest, but this narrative is concerned chiefly with the one feature of it which stands out most strikingly in memory — the light it shed on the width and the warmth of the Commodore's friendships. Who, other than he, under these conditions would have remembered that in Wiscasset there were Sewalls, of the family which had given its name to Sewall's Point on the Indian River? And who, in talk with the Sewalls, would have stumbled on the story of Brickell's predecessor on the south bank of the Miami — the Mr. Barnes who was nursed by William Wagner on the old Fletcher place? Only one



whose memory was exact and tenacious could have so interwoven the fugitive strands of recollection as to enlarge his knowledge of ancient history on the Miami River in a sleepy village on the coast of Maine.

And so it went throughout the following weeks. We sailed to Fox Island Thoroughfare, where, opposite Northhaven, Mr. Davis had a summer home, and lay some days, mostly fog-bound, in the icy, racing current, luxuriously fed (and bathed!) by our generous host. Then, tiring of this somewhat strenuous anchorage, we felt our way around Brown's Head and into a tiny cove much too small and shoal for local craft, but offering *Tramp*, with her 30-inch draft, a lovely, land-locked harbor, without current, wholly delightful.

Fog was much too common here to suit our Florida tastes, and we were tempted to turn directly southward, but almost everybody wanted to reach Bar Harbor, and presently a lovely, sparkling day carried us nearly there — to Northeast Harbor. Then more fog. We climbed Brown's Mountain and picked blueberries — just in their prime; we explored Soame's Sound; we tramped the village — always with an eye out for tempting food; and thereby hangs a tale!

Returning to the landing at dusk, in two parties, each with several packages for the storeroom, we hurried on board and hastily assembled a picnic supper. Someone remarked, "This is good cheese, where did you find it?" One of the other party answered in surprise, "Why, *we* didn't buy that — you must have brought it yourselves!" Followed a comparison of notes which disclosed several parcels of food not purchased by any of our company! Obviously, someone's order of groceries had been delivered on the float when we arrived, and each of us had assumed that the other half of our party had brought it, and loaded it in. There was nothing to be done; it was now dark, and there were no means of learning which of the numerous yachts in the harbor owned that food.



We enjoyed it, but I have often wished I could compare notes with its owner.

It became evident that we were not to have good weather for any further eastward run. Meanwhile came the staggering news of the German War; one of the big liners had been warned to shelter after leaving New York, and put in at Bar Harbor. It was all incredible to a degree hard to remember now when we have spent sixteen bitter years learning that it was true, and what it all meant. It was very disheartening to pleasure-cruisers, and still the fog drifted dankly across the fir-crested granite of the islands. With the first watery sunshine we headed west again.

New Harbor on Pemaquid again made us thankful for light draft. Its tiny anchorage was pretty well filled, while we could comfortably lie far up on the flats at its head, nearer the landings, in much better shelter, and entirely safe from fouling the heavy and dilapidated schooners which nuzzled each other below. An interesting village, and a comfortable night which I have always remembered with pleasure.

Portsmouth was lovely, of course, and of course the Commodore was enthusiastically greeted, this time by Admiral Delano, who made sure that we saw all worth seeing in the town and the Navy Yard. We slipped around Cape Ann on the fairest of summer days and anchored at Manchester, where *Micco* was delivered when she was sold, twenty-two years before. Then Salem and Marblehead — and I need not say what they mean to cruisers. At Marblehead were several familiar boats, among them the interesting old schooner-home of Arthur Perrin — the *Calrina*, built in 1861, designer and builder unknown, the ancient woodwork of her heavy cabins beautifully preserved and adapted to modern uses. On her we spent a good evening, vastly entertained by Mr. Perrin's store of old sea-yarns — heritage of the many generations of shipping merchants, whose house-flag was his private signal.





Then across Massachusetts Bay to Plymouth — and that visit none of us will ever forget. Judge Francis Torrey Morton had stayed at Camp Biscayne and delighted the Commodore by recalling, and even playing, the popular music of his boyhood. Born of Pilgrim ancestors who were humanitarians and philanthropists, Judge Morton followed in their footsteps. A close student of nature, a writer of both prose and verse, and a singer with an exceptional voice, he was the youngest member admitted to the Circle of the Immortals at Concord. In the eastern edge of Plymouth, on the waterfront, was the old Morton home, looking down to the harbor across the remnants of the old ways and shops, for his was a shipbuilding family for generations. Here under the ancient trees dwelt the judge with his three sisters, and here two of the sisters received the Commodore's party that August afternoon — and the manner of the reception was unique in our experience, and most impressive.

Introduction over, one of the ladies smiled, nodded to her sister and to a visiting friend, saying "Now we must give you greeting," and the three at once raised melodious and well-trained voices in a charming brief song of welcome! We were somewhat taken aback, scarcely knowing how to respond properly, but it was all quite matter of course; as we sat about a comfortable tea-table under the trees they explained that song had come to be their one expression of emotion. When feeling, of whatever kind, ran high, they found music its best expression and antidote; joy and sorrow, love and hate, friendship, worship — all the "feelings" of their lives — they expressed in appropriate song, and found that it soothed and dignified what might have been unduly emphasized by mere talk.

More friends joined the tea-table group, where all of us inevitably talked with horror-stricken incredulity of the invasion of Belgium, the threat to shipping and the other unbelievable monstrosities of the first days of the war, that are now so tame and commonplace in the light



of what followed. Excitement was inevitable, and bitter condemnation — but scarcely had a voice been raised when Miss Morton lifted a hand — “Now, let’s all sing!” and the stately measures of a great hymn rolled out beneath the trees in simple and dignified harmonies. Here was beauty against ugliness, faith against fear, eternal greatness against the ultimate pettiness of human wrong and failure — and we returned to the discussion quieter, saner, stronger. Again the talk grew turbulent and was modified and fortified by song, and shortly after we took our departure, to a melodious chorus of farewell. It was a notable visit, hard now to duplicate, since the Mortons are gone from the old home.

The Cape Cod Canal had just been opened to traffic, and through it *Tramp* slipped one morning to the lovely anchorage of Marion, where another enthusiastic greeting awaited the Commodore. And so it went down the familiar Sound, calling at all the great ports, as well as at Mystic for some engine work, at New Haven on the various cousins, at Oyster Bay for dinner in Mr. Matheson’s great summer home on the crest of the easterly hills, and finally spending a week or more among the clustering associations of Staten Island, where the Commodore renewed his memories, and the children saw the scenes of many of “Daddy’s” stories.

Thence finally we ran through the quiet inland waters of the canals, the Delaware River and the Chesapeake to Annapolis. There we put *Tramp* in Heller’s yard, to be picked up by Bill and Benny later, and departed by rail, just like common travelers! It was a great cruise, because it covered a long stretch of interesting coast with unusual ease and comfort, and especially because it was a revelation of how long and warmly the Commodore remembered his friends and was remembered by them.

The cloud of the Great War hovered over Coconut Grove, of course, along with the rest of the country —





though its shadow was not as dark on the Barnacle as on some houses, since Wirth was only fifteen years old when the United States "came in." Meanwhile Camp Biscayne had established its Red Cross workroom in the Factory, and some familiar boats and faces were missing. The chief outward change on the Bay was the establishment of a great Naval Air Training Station at Dinner Key, just above Coconut Grove. The land was filled in by dredge to extend the old "key" into a large blunt point with sandy beaches, which was fenced off both from entrance and from observation by a huge barricade. Great barracks, water-works and shops were built, and several hundred men put into training. All this was at least interesting, but when actual flying began the station proved itself an unmitigated nuisance, which really should not have been established in a thickly settled neighborhood. Twenty or more planes were in the air from dawn to dark, flying about the neighborhood, low to the water or just over the housetops, the throaty roar of their huge engines keeping the air and even the earth aquiver, and effectually stopping all conversation save a few words shouted into someone's ear. At the same time as many more engines were usually under test at Dinner Key, adding their thunderous undertone.

One might suppose that custom would dull one's ears to such noise, and that it would become a mere background to everyday life, but this uproar was not quite monotonous enough, since each engine started with an especially vicious outburst, and each plane that swooped past overhead drummed at one's ears as though with a burst of machine-gun fire. Besides, it all ceased at dark, and the blessed stillness of the night was always a foil for the recurring bedlam of the next day.

The dreadful waste of war, both in men and material, was sadly brought home to the Bay by the work of this station, for here, in peaceful training, with no enemy to dread, planes were daily diving into the Bay, to drown



their pilots and leave their delicate and elaborate structures a mass of wreckage, anchored to the bottom by the weight of their engines. Behind the great barricade on Dinner Key was a junk-heap of many acres, where the wrecked planes, stripped of a few of the more valuable instruments, were piled high, eventually to be burned. But the air-patrol of the Straits of Florida was maintained between Key West, Miami and Bimini, and the war, especially in its early stages, might well have taken such a turn as to make this patrol invaluable.

Bimini must have been mightily stirred by its share in this business, for the contrast between the straggling settlement of discouraged wreckers in 1914 and the lively air station of 1917 was as great as possible. The American flyers certainly added life to the islands with their constant visits, and the queer little out-world settlement must have given a spice of interest to their strenuous course of training. There was marvelous fishing at Bimini, and prohibition was not in force there. Many a plane returned to Dinner Key with the extra burden of some huge grouper or other monster of the deep, and rumor now and then hinted that the capacious maws of these creatures were quite big enough to hold two or three bottles! Be that as it may, I am sure that Bimini was a touch of cheerful life and color in the drab grind of the war.

There was little cruising, of course. There were other things to do, and whatever one's personal interests, it was no time for peaceful lazying among the idle islands. To a great extent the sails disappeared from the bay, and they have only just begun to come back; for when pleasure-boating was resumed, power was the thing. Now, seemingly, the possibilities of power have been covered, its novelty is gone, and the charm of canvas is striking home again to the minds of many. Sailing is a great art, capable of indefinite development, endlessly fascinating because boats and conditions are both endlessly various, clean, cool, quiet and beautiful.



I need not say that this decade of no sails, with its undreamed-of upheavals, its confusion and distress, driven home by the roar of innumerable seaplanes, was a time of small joy for the Commodore. Not directly affected by the war, he might well be selected as one of the most fortunate of Americans — but no one can gauge the cost of the war without going beyond the losses of life and property, to the years of interrupted work and interests, of puzzle and distress, laid on all, even those apparently most remote from the great tangle.





## XI

### THE GROWING CITY OF MIAMI

THE years of overconfidence immediately after the war brought to the Bay a burst of growth and progress well-nigh incredible, even to those who knew it best and were most enthusiastic as to its future. Miami grew by leaps and bounds. The beach where once Field and Osborn's coconut-planters had their wilderness camp suddenly became a vast and very elaborate watering-place, with huge hotels, wonderful casinos, golf courses and all the rest of it. The bridge linking the sea to the town became inadequate, and a huge causeway was built across the Bay, a few feet above water and a hundred feet wide, and even it was crowded with holiday traffic. Indian Creek, so long merely a mangrove-lined lagoon full of crocodiles, became an ornamental water, surrounded by ornate Spanish villas, winding drives and lovely parks. The shoal water of the upper bay tempted the dredges, and a flock of islands appeared, surrounded by deep water and linked by bridges, whereon more Spanish villas grew like mushrooms.

Meanwhile the new Miami inlet, cut through the beach direct to the city, with its dredged harbor at the wharves, which had seemed an extravagant vision to many of us, was pushed through, its successive difficulties studied and solved, and the new city began to be a real port. Not content with actual growth, Miami now began to reach out, like Los Angeles, and absorb its smaller neighbors -- not always to their satisfaction, or even with their consent! For the state law most curiously provides that in cases of proposed consolidation between two communities, the question shall be decided by a *joint vote* of the two, so that where such a union is manifestly to the advantage of



the larger town, the smaller is robbed of all voice in the matter. Such was the case with Coconut Grove, which felt itself not only at a considerable distance from Miami, but in complete contrast to it in citizenship, needs and interests, and not in the least interested in helping to pay the rapidly mounting expenses of the ambitious young city. Its resistance was effective for a time, but eventually a joint election was held, and Coconut Grove was swallowed, willy-nilly, like a trout by a bass. This was distinctly *not* what the Commodore had betaken himself to the wilderness for, but after all, the results were in many ways a matter of form, and by no means so annoying as some of the other accompaniments of the swirling surge of humanity centering on Miami.

Problems concerning the use and development of the waterfront were many, vexatious, and pressing. Actual title to the riparian rights in Coconut Grove had been settled by the fight with Sneider almost twenty years earlier, but now came the physical treatment of the shore line to puzzle all concerned. Should the shore be filled in? If so, how far out? And what finish should be given the fill that would be permanent, sightly and clean?

Everybody wants more land, and the general voice was in favor of filling in, but the desirable extent of the fill was another matter, for the old anchorage at Coconut Grove, in which the Commodore's moorings had been laid since the eighties, was but a small pool, close along the shore, more to be injured than helped by an extensive fill. On the other hand, any attempt to go beyond this, to materially deeper water in the bay, involved a distance of almost a mile, and apart from the expense, there was not within reach enough loose material on the bottom to make such work possible. At last the War Department fixed the "bulkhead line," or limit of private rights, somewhat arbitrarily, but at least definitely, running it straight down, almost through the middle of the old anchorage. This left the Commodore and his immediate





neighbors in the center of the bight from Peacock's to the Yacht Club, in a quandary. They were at a considerable distance from the new line, so that filling out to it meant a very heavy expense; also, such a fill would destroy the greater part of the small natural anchorage at that point — one of the especial charms of "Jack's Bight" for the small cruiser. Of course, they were not obliged to make this fill, but if they did not, and their neighbors did, they would be left embayed between long walls, in a pocket which would be sure to catch all the seaweed, driftwood and trash driven alongshore by wind and tide — an offensive and unwholesome accumulation, quite expensive to remove. There followed years of discussion and argument, with the object of establishing a voluntary neighborhood bulkhead line, within the official one, on a curve paralleling the shore.

At the same time the question of sea-walls versus beaches was brought up and well talked over. To all newcomers the concrete sea-wall, carried straight up a few feet above ordinary high tide, was the obvious answer. They knew nothing of the great gales of former years, nor of the abnormal tides accompanying them, several of which the Commodore had seen. He well knew that the most severe of these were sure sooner or later to be repeated; and he knew that with the water heaped up several feet above such a wall, and a sea driven up the length of the bay, or even across its width, by a wind of hurricane force, the walls would merely make the swells break with concentrated intensity, not against their outer surface, but over them and down upon the sand and earth filled in behind them, which must suffer severely. So it has been, all along our coasts, that the heaviest of sea-walls have so often been undermined from the rear, in severe storms, and carried away, even though their weight and strength were such that no direct attack by the surf could affect them.

Instead of them the Commodore urgently recom-



mended a shelving breakwater of loose stone, similar to the generally accepted jetty construction along the Atlantic coast, its crest not too high, and bound by cement grouting. On such a structure the heaviest sea would break harmlessly, to slide quietly over in foam, even as on a natural slanting beach, without injuring either the stonework or the land behind. Its seawardslope could be sanded for a bathing-beach with good prospect of permanence, making a clean, beautiful and useful waterfront.

These suggestions were in accord with current practice elsewhere on the coast, and there is little question that the result would have been satisfactory. But the extremely mild and peaceful everyday aspect of the shoal bay waters was all that the promoters could see, and there was no record of a destructive gale since 1906, before the rapid growth of Miami began. No filling was actually done at Coconut Grove until the great boom, when the old Peacock Inn property and the Camp Biscayne land were both extended to the bulkhead line, fifty feet or so beyond the end of the old Factory wharf, and were bounded by vertical sea-walls. Thus the Gardner, Munroe and Poole lands now lie at the bottom of a square-sided bight, or depression, in the new shore line, and their beaches gather in an extra quantity of trash and Gulf-weed — the latter fortunately having some value as fertilizer! Various plans for coöperation on the part of these three owners have been suggested, looking to the establishment of a sweeping breakwater on this stretch, conforming to the natural beach, and leaving the anchorage undisturbed, with storage basins between it and the present shore; but as yet no agreement has been reached.

Dr. David Fairchild entered this discussion with an interesting open letter in the Dade County "Times," from which we may quote a few sentences:

*Dear Commodore Munroe:*

. . . Of all the hard problems, I think that of making the seawall look like anything but what it is — a fright of masonry — has



been hardest. I don't like sea-walls, and will never have one on my place. I have traveled the world over, and cannot recall a single one which I would like to have always within sight. . . .

And now you tell me that the beaches are to go — those delightful things which lured us to Biscayne Bay years ago, and still haunt us with their charm. Are people blind to the money value of the picturesque? Do they want to drag down and depress the value of all the real estate about them, and their own with it? . . . Let us study our beach fronts, and vie with each other in making them bits of those "seashores of endless worlds where children play," as Tagore expresses it. . . .

There is something to me truly pathetic in the spectacle of one of the very oldest pioneers on Biscayne Bay having to stand up and cry out, like John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, "For God's sake save the beaches of the Bay!" Is there nobody among the winter residents who will stand beside you and help you fight the battle? . . .

Wishing you, my dear Commodore, everything that you deserve, I remain

DAVID FAIRCHILD

Scant, indeed, is the help from the visitors — but the fighting blood which founded the clan Munroe and carried it through centuries of military glory,<sup>1</sup> reappears in the Commodore's courageous persistence in just such problems as this. Whenever the community needs a champion of right and beauty against the exploitation of greed and the fallacies of inexperience, his banner is to the fore, and his voice raised in no uncertain tone.

Intimately connected with sea-walls was the question of sewage-disposal. On the absorption of Coconut Grove by the city it was immediately proposed to install city sewers to replace the former individual septic tanks or cesspools. These had been efficient and satisfactory, but were doubtless not a good standard to set for the wildfire growth of the new suburbs which were covering the country back to the Everglades and far up and down the coast. Be that as it may, the idea of discharging the accumulated sewage of the new Coconut Grove directly into

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I, "The Munroe Family," p. 365.





the pure waters of the Bay was equally revolting and unpractical. The Commodore, in open letters, called attention to the fact that Coconut Grove is placed in a broad bay of shoal water directly opposite the chief tidal inlets at Cape Florida; the current of the flood tide therefore flows up and down the Bay from the Cape, leaving Coconut Grove in a "dead" triangle where the only tidal currents are a very slight movement inshore and out again. For two miles from the Grove there is no active scour from the tide, and the water of the Bay is changed only by gales from north or south. This area would therefore be little more than an open cesspool if it received the sewage of the new city. Further, owing to many springs, the water of the dead triangle is much less salt than the rest of the bay, which would weaken its disinfecting action. Altogether, in consideration of the great difficulty experienced by Miami with this problem, even with its much more active tidal currents, and nearer inlets, this method at Coconut Grove was plainly undesirable.

In this and similar problems of the new era the Commodore found himself often standing alone, not only as the sole person with sufficient experience and close knowledge of the country to judge adequately, but also as one of the few not directly and often somewhat dizzily involved in the growing whirl of speculation. The only cry of the promoter was to "get things done" and that promptly. What did he care about the bacterial content of Jack's Bight in the next few years? He wanted to show the eager purchasers of lots in the multitude of "additions" which were absorbing the pineland, that "sewer-connection" settled their sanitary problems — and the old hold-backs along the waterfront gave him a pain!

It was, therefore, a thankless task to oppose these ill-judged "improvements," yet one that the Commodore could not refuse, either in his own personal interest, or as a public-spirited citizen of the community which he



loved and wanted to live in, despite its transformations. As he wrote in one such letter: "Few people coming to this country have any practical ideas for combating Nature's forces, and many are prone to ridicule the suggestions of those of experience; yet I feel it incumbent on me to risk criticism and write this." So many a golden afternoon in these last years was spent in digging into records and formulating experiences and memories in the effort to protect himself and the town from some such disastrous proposition, made either through hasty ignorance, or by purely selfish developers; and life sometimes seemed to consist far too much of contention and struggle for the preservation and enjoyment of those very privileges and blessings for which people were flocking to the Bay. Undoubtedly the wilderness days of Brickell's store, the Bay View Villa and the Key West mail schooner gained an added aura of peace and happiness in the light of such controversies.

Worse than the question of sewage was that of island-building, which was a popular form of promotion all over the bay in the first years of the boom. The state of Florida claimed title to all "submerged lands" over which there was less than three feet of water at mean high tide, and many such areas, especially in the upper end of the Bay, on the beach side, had been sold, raised by dredging to habitable land, with deep water around them, and parceled out at huge prices, with corresponding profits. At last a colossal plan of this sort was sprung on Coconut Grove by a group of men who claimed to have millions in money behind them, and plenty of influence, and declared that nothing should stand in the way of their plans. These involved a system of closely connected artificial islands, sweeping almost from Dinner Key to Cocoplum, around the shoal waters of Jack's Bight, and completely cutting off the Coconut Grove waterfront from the Bay! There were to be three drawbridges, whereby the yachts of the old landowners could emerge





to open water; otherwise the waterfront developments of forty years were to take a back seat, and their highly valued view of the Bay and the sea be exchanged for an array of island buildings. From a mere commercial standpoint this was an obvious and serious invasion of private rights, for the very great premium at which the waterfront lands had always sold must be destroyed. From the esthetic and sentimental side it was even more disastrous — much as though some means had been found of building a habitable reef in front of the cliff at Newport, R. I., and the occupants of that sacred ground were suddenly called upon to exchange their sea-view for the backyards of unknown neighbors.

Again it rested with the Commodore to speak for the community, and he formulated the objectors' position in a forcible and comprehensive protest to the District Engineer. The plan was checked, from the sane perspective of a Northern viewpoint, and now that the boom is over, it is well-nigh incredible that it should ever have been proposed; yet under the hectic conditions of 1924 and 1925 it might have been pushed through with quick and great profits to the promoters, whatever the result to the town.

The island-building craze, indeed, was to show one more phase, even more remarkable than this. A syndicate was formed to fill in certain sections of the coral banks, south of Cape Florida, and establish a wind-swept community there between bay and sea, depending on remaining portions of the shoals to protect them from the surf. Anyone who had seen the effects of a hurricane on these flats — anyone who had even talked with those who experienced the '76 blow on the Bay — knew how utterly insecure such fills would be; the hurricane-tide and sea would inevitably sweep them away, whatever "sea-walls" surrounded them. That, perhaps, might have been left to the judgment, or lack of it, of the promoters, but there was another aspect of the hurricane problem. Always,



as we have seen, the greatest destruction is caused by the water, especially in its "backwash" on the reversal of the wind in the middle of the storm. If this comes in such a way that the reverse bore, or tidal wave, has reasonably free exit to the sea, comparatively little harm is done; if it comes toward the land, or against islands, the limit of its height and power are hard to guess; it sweeps over everything in its path with all-devouring might.

Such harm as previous gales had done to Key Biscayne and other islands east of the Bay was by this backwash, working against their inner shores, not protected by natural beaches — and this in spite of the ten-mile opening over the coral banks south of the Cape. If any material portion of these banks were raised into islands, the effect on existing lands must be to concentrate the flood more and more on them, with most disastrous results.

When the coral-bank island plan became public, therefore, interested landowners at once applied for an injunction, and in the subsequent hearings some extremely interesting facts were developed, especially in the evidence of Commodore Munroe, and in that of the engineer who had been in charge of construction of the Key West railroad. The size and power of the hurricane tides, the violence of the reverse bore and its action when opposed by obstructions, were made plain, with the consequent necessity for the broad seaward outlet of the bay over the coral flats between Cape Florida and Elliott's Key. So many references were made to this opening, and so much stress laid on it, that at last the judge asked the Commodore whether it had a name.

"No," he answered, "I never heard any name applied to it, but if one were needed, I should suggest 'The Safety Valve' since that is its function to the whole of Biscayne Bay," and there the matter of name rested, for the time.

All the testimony against the proposed islands was on



the line of the danger involved in any confinement of the tides in future hurricanes, or diversion of them from their long-established natural outlets by islands, causeways, jetties, or other embankments, and all that the Commodore said was fully confirmed by the builder of the railroad. Considerable embankment-work had been completed by the railroad in October, 1906, and the engineer in charge had an excellent demonstration of the ways of hurricanes with obstructions. A large portion of the new banks was washed away, though they were supposedly protected by surrounding shoal water and surfaced with hardened marl; and the added height and accompanying violence of the floods when so checked and confined were conclusively demonstrated. At the same time, many of the company's boats, with much equipment, were smashed or driven out to sea, and those in charge, or their survivors (for many died), gained a pretty fair working knowledge of storm possibilities.

The testimony of these two disinterested men of obvious experience and judgment was sufficient to secure the desired injunction, since confirmed by the Supreme Court, and the absurd coral-bank islands were averted. Needless to say, neither witness was popular with the promoters, and since their testimony had to do solely with future hurricanes, and it was entirely contrary to the hurrah-boys spirit of the boom, then at its height, to suggest the possibility of hurricanes, let alone their virtual certainty, they seem to have been pretty generally disliked. It was indeed fortunate for all concerned, including the promoters, that the courts maintained a perfectly calm and neutral attitude, for the boom was approaching its crest, and within a few months there was to be a hurricane even more destructive than that of 1876. Had the proposed islands been built, they must have been destroyed, and every cent that went into them lost, while the effect on existing lands would have been disastrous.

About a year after this hearing the Commodore was





notified that the name "Safety Valve," which he so casually suggested, had been formally proposed to the government's Geographic Board and duly adopted, so that all future charts of the Bay will have this warning title engraved across the face of the banks. "There!" was his comment, "that will be a definite stumbling block for future plans of this kind!"

So the worst of the island-building was headed off, at least temporarily, for had the wild pace of the big boom been maintained, it is more than probable that these and other similar schemes would have been forced through, such is the power of unlimited money, and the lure of fabulous profits. But the boom did at last break, and most of Coconut Grove, together with all the Cape banks, have been spared the encroachment of artificial land.

Thus the precocious young city grew by progressively greater strides. Its progress, wild enough in the optimistic year following the war, was scarcely checked in the subsequent financial depression and thereafter swept forward in great bursts of speed and excitement which culminated in the boom.

Each step in this process carried the Bay further away from the conditions and the spirit for which early visitors had loved it. The Commodore, looking back on the wild natural beauty of 1877, and the warm-hearted friends of 1881, must turn to his desk to carry on some further argument against greed and ignorance and the inevitable encroachments of voracious newcomers.

This was a period of sensational growth for the Bay from a material point of view, but at the same time distinctly one of deterioration in those elements which made it desirable as a permanent home. It was not a comfortable epoch for the Commodore, and there were times when he cast a questioning eye down toward the keys, or spent hours cogitating the possibility of a houseboat home, with the feeling that sooner or later these new aspects of civilization might make the Barnacle untenable.



But there was nothing like "Jack's Bight" on the lower bay, and the keys had many disadvantages. The increasing comfort and beauty of his home were great, the interests of Camp Biscayne were more and more absorbing — in short, the Commodore had taken root deeply, and could not seriously think of leaving this home which had been so happy for nearly forty years.

One difficulty common to the older residents was the paradoxical fact that the richer they grew the poorer they were — that is, the more the value of their homes increased, the harder it was to take care of the increased obligations, especially taxes. Miami had some difficult and expensive municipal problems, and its budget grew so fast from year to year that it was hard put to it for income, and could not afford to overlook any possible increase in valuation or rate; so that where the Barnacle had paid a small rate on a nominal assessment, it suddenly was called upon for the heaviest city rates on values that leaped madly upward month by month. Many even of those who most loved their homes were forced out of them simply because it took all their income to pay taxes! This was especially evident, of course, in the case of a business proposition like Camp Biscayne, and when the weight of the post-war taxes began to settle on the wrong side of its ledger, that friendly enterprise was of necessity facing its end.

But the Commodore held on, muttering an occasional malediction on the new era, economizing for the benefit of the city, but still whole-heartedly devoted to the climate and the region, and fully determined not to be driven out of the Barnacle.





## XII

### THE BOOM, 1924

SO matters lay in 1924, when fifty years of growing population and prices culminated in the great boom. This is not the place to dwell on that strange storm of avarice and hysteria, which swept down from Wall Street in a blinding whirl of dust, and threatened the destruction of southern Florida. It is not long since every newspaper in the United States was full of it, every village had its youthful wiseacre with a friend in Miami who coined fortunes daily, and almost every man, woman and child in the country longed to start pell-mell for the new El Dorado.

How many of them actually did so start we can only guess, but we know that the trains were jammed and the roads crowded with motor cars of every make and condition. A solid river of eager humanity poured steadily southward, often with the vaguest plans and the scantiest resources. No one can work without a foothold, and no successful business was ever founded on air, so a great majority of these impulsive travelers, being without business or money, with ten men to contend for every piece of day's labor, found themselves in danger of acute want, and incontinently headed north again.

One must give the city and state authorities credit for a wise and vigorous attitude toward this horde. So far as possible they discouraged and turned back the unthinking masses, gave such help as they could to the stranded, and did their best to protect them from the exploitation which their circumstances invited. For of course the huge and rather aimless crowd, eager to get a foothold in this land which they insisted would give them immediate wealth, were simply ripe fruit, ready to drop



into the mouths of unscrupulous land-agents and other sharks.

With these latter gentry Miami dealt summarily, and many a self-styled "realtor" was run out of town like the gamblers from the old mining camps. None the less the city and the country swarmed with them, like flies on a molasses barrel, and they and their too-eager patrons so crowded Miami that a good bedroom commanded the rent of a whole house, and many a night's rest was taken on a park bench. This was a real bonanza for those who had rooms to spare, since a few weeks' rent of a couple of unused rooms, even porches, often covered the entire pre-boom value of house and lot! Merchandise prices were equally high, but the profits not nearly so satisfactory, since costs had also risen and freight was tremendous, while shipments were indefinitely delayed and often embargoed altogether. At times there were thousands of loaded freight-cars packed on the sidings north of Jacksonville waiting for the return of some of the "empties" which jammed the trackage of the state before they could be sent forward.

At the same time, of course, water shipment was equally stimulated; bulky freights, especially lumber, were sent largely by schooner, and the whole waterfront of Miami's new dredged harbor was a clustering forest of masts and rigging, which took the Commodore back to the South Street of the clipper ship days in New York, while inside the reef, off the jetties of the new inlet, another fleet was anchored awaiting its turn at the piers.

In the midst of this shipping excitement some ill-advised genius bought an old square-rigger and sailed her to Miami, with the intention of tying her up along the waterfront, and renting her ample space in small sleeping rooms. How this would have worked we do not know; she was too deep to enter in normal trim, and, her ballast having been removed, a gust of wind rolled her over and sank her in the narrowest part of the dredged channel.



Here was surely a mess — a fleet of ships eager to get in, another eager to get out, and no passage whatever. For weeks the old hulk lay there while everybody raged, and one can only wonder why she was not immediately blown up; there were hints that the railroad had inspired the whole affair, though one would suppose that they would be glad to be relieved of bulky freight at such a time.

Of course the business life of the town was completely rebuilt every few months in this period. People no longer worked by mail, but by telegraph, and the wild plungers were so often richly rewarded in the beginning that plunging became the proper procedure. One real estate story only I need quote. I do not vouch for it — it matters little whether it was true, so long as it was current and generally accepted. A promoter bought a tract at eight in the morning, cut it up into lots on paper in his office, and sold all the lots before five o'clock that night. The purchase price was three millions, the sale price eleven; his profits, eight million dollars for eight hours' work. Comment is superfluous.

The banks were perhaps the hardest pressed of the permanent businesses. It was theirs to finance such operations as the above, and their expansion was hard to keep up with. One, I know, increased its working force from sixty to a hundred and eighty within a few months — and had to apologize for the inevitable errors of the new clerks!

I need not say what all this mad fever meant to the life of the Barnacle and its once-quiet neighborhood at Coconut Grove. Land and profit, development and subdivision, were the burden of all talk. Not an hour passed without the insistent visit of some eager speculator with plans for making a million overnight, who usually departed completely nonplused at the Commodore's indifference to such paper millions, but with no time to speculate on this queer man. Where people had once talked in





quarter-sections, and later of acres, footage was now the thing. Odd bits of land, too small, irregular or inaccessible to have been considered, sold for fortunes.

And what of the beauty of the Bay, the charm of the trade wind, the delight of sailing, the rich fruits of friendship among neighbors enjoyed in the daily interchange of talk and joke and mutual service? Mr. Gardner told me at this time that all such kindly elements of happy, wholesome life had so completely disappeared from Coconut Grove that he felt very indifferent about coming back to his comfortable home there another year. "I can't keep the speculators off the grounds," he said, "and no one is interested in any other subject. It is in the air, like a fever, and there is no peace left."

Of course assessments and taxes still mounted dizzily, and it is probable that the Commodore would have seriously considered leaving his home, so lovingly developed and so perfectly to his taste, but for the possibilities of profit in the Camp Biscayne land. It soon became obvious, as was said before, that no such simple enterprise could afford to pay the new taxes and maintain rates at all acceptable to its patrons — for though many of these were wealthy, none were of the ostentatious type which made the new hotels and their preposterous rates possible. One was opened at Miami Beach about this time with a basic rate of \$35 a day, and it was full the first year and enlarged the second!

In the end the growing costs and the increasing burden of caring for the plant made the fairy-tale offers for the Camp land attractive. Of course none of these were cash; all involved a period of years to complete payment, during which, if current values receded, the property would "come home to roost." Of course every voice was raised in vehement protest whenever the word "boom" was pronounced. "This is *not* a boom — it is the final, long-delayed recognition, on the part of the whole country, of the unique value of South Florida, and these prices



will *never* break." But the earmarks of speculation were too prominent, and the Commodore had seen too much of human vagaries to be caught with such talk, Florida enthusiast though he was and is. So among many offers for the Camp he finally selected one made by people of unquestionable financial stability, and including a substantial first payment. Though by no means the largest price offered, this arrangement promised to hold, and the ideas of the purchasers as to the use of the property seemed reasonable, so it was accepted.

I do not wish to decry progress — and after all, the new era is giving its votaries what they want, and the new Bay may well be proud of its wealth and magnificence and comfort; only, to the obsolete taste of those who loved Florida for its climate, its boating and fishing, and the friendships formed among those of similar tastes in these surroundings, the new ideals seem very empty.

Coral Gables may be taken, perhaps, as the type and crest of boom developments, and surely never were broader and better plans applied to the real estate business. Starting on a comparatively modest scale, but with high ideals of civic beauty, it expanded with amazing rapidity in the years preceding the boom, taking in tract after tract of new land, and always ready with comprehensive and well-considered plans for its use. It maintained the strictest supervision over all improvements; house plans must be approved by the city engineers, not only as to strength and durability, but as to looks, in which they must be attractive in themselves and in harmony with their surroundings. Even such details as awnings and roof-tiles were passed upon; the latter must be used tiles, taken from some old roof, softened and blended in color by time, moss and dust. Different neighborhoods were rigidly limited, one for business, one for small bungalows, one for villas of pure Spanish type, one for French cottages, and so forth. A very grand hotel was built as a center for public life, and golf





courses, swimming pools, and all the rest of it, were included. The huge tower above the hotel is now the most prominent landmark on approaching Coconut Grove by water, even though it is some miles inland — rather a contrast to Aunt Tilly Pent's cooking fire, which long ago guided the *Kingfish* back to her moorings!

The great objection to Coral Gables from the water-lover's point of view was that it stood miles back in the old "piny woods," that barren and forbidding waste of trees, scrub palmetto, coontie-plants and rattlesnakes which had for so many years stood undisturbed, entered only by an occasional deer-hunter. We who were drawn to Florida by love of the water, to whom Miami and Coconut Grove meant the respective waterfronts, found it hard to understand why anyone should immure himself in this hinterland, far from the glint of sun on sea and the refreshing breath of the trade wind. In the end the management evidently came to appreciate in some degree the importance of the Bay, and their purchases reached farther and farther around the west and south of the Grove, and eventually included the whole of Cocoplum Beach. Plans for the creation of a little world of islands and waterways were at once published, and some work begun, while a very Coney-like resort, with swimming pools, etc., grew out from our old sandy bathing spot, under the name of Tahiti Beach. Snapper Creek Canal was widened, deepened and extended, with branches aggregating twenty miles in length, navigable for freight and pleasure boats, so that Coral Gables could at once announce "Forty Miles of Waterfront!" Which is, perhaps, hardly fair to quote, since very little of their advertising was in any way misleading.

Meanwhile a good deal of rather startled publicity was given Coral Gables by the announcement of Miami University, to be started off with a fund of \$15,000,000 raised by popular subscription, which the founder of Coral Gables opened with a casual gift of land and cash



totaling \$5,000,000! Such were the visions and gestures of the boom-leaders; even the most balanced and cautious of them had seen the stream of money pour into the land in constantly increasing volume for so many years that they could scarcely be blamed for thinking of that increase as a fixed feature of the flood.

Unfortunately a constant and everlasting increase in profits does not seem to be a mundane possibility, in real estate or any other business. Early in 1925 Florida speculation had made so many sudden fortunes from a shoe-string, and had therefore absorbed so many bank-accounts and buried hordes that even Wall Street had gone as far as it could in the "new line." The iridescent structures piled in heavenly glory on every Florida acre by the eloquence of the promoter had reached their limit of number, size and brilliance, and it needed the barest breath of discouragement from a sudden tightening of money on the Street to check their further growth. Vain to protest that Wall Street had nothing to do with Florida; useless to insist that a few days would see prices leaping as usual; and everybody busy and happy. The jolly, glittering stream of dollars, which had kept the whole works working, was somewhere choked at its source, and like a plant out of water, the big boom began to wilt.

It was no spectacular process. To begin with, the mass of the people could not get it into their heads that anything was wrong, for weeks and months after the stroke of doom had definitely sounded for the really capable speculator, whether honest or otherwise. These gentry began very quietly slipping out of sight immediately after the Wall Street break; no need for the city to watch them, or suggest their moving on, now, for they were through with Miami, and looking for new ground to work. Their departure, while primarily evidence of a break in prices, and warning of losses to come, was in itself one of the best things that ever happened to Miami, and it was at once recognized as such by practically every



landowner or business man permanently interested in the region.

For the big boom was based, not only on the usual boom methods, but on an unusually large element of permanent and rapidly increasing real value in the Miami region, and all of this remained and continued to grow, after the paper profits were swept away, and the paper losses mounted into the vague realm of billions. It is significant of the break at Miami that almost all of the losers were speculators, and most of them outsiders. Those old property owners who had seen their land grow to a hundred times its cost, and held it through because they liked it, could feel nothing but thankful relief when the tension of unreal values was snapped. Some of them might regret not having sold "at the top," but since practically no such sales were made for cash, and the authorities have been rushed ever since in nullifying them and deeding the lands back to their original owners, such regret is scarcely worth while. A few of the old-timers turned over their lands and became speculators, and suffered with the rest, but not many. Most of the losses were the paper profits of the outsider, pure and simple, who only "got what was coming to him" — and even his actual cash loss was not often great.

Now that the flurry is over, and the smoke somewhat cleared away, we find those most deeply interested in Florida once more in the saddle — the larger landowners, very few of whom were moved to sell out, who feel that their land is now worth every cent of boom prices, with perhaps a few of the paper dollars of the last year knocked off, and have tangible evidence in support of this in the excellent prices current for occasional sales of good land. Even the gale which followed the boom and its break cannot affect the feeling of these men that their property is now worth more, substantially, than ever before, and that it has before it an assured growth in value like that of the pre-boom years. Altogether I suppose it is unrea-





sonable to feel that Florida should expect to escape such delirium; it has been a part of all long and rapid growth in value. Be that as it may, and bitter pill as it was, Florida has swallowed it, disgorged it, recovered from the fever, and is beginning to feel normal again. And the land is just as beautiful and delightful as before.



### XIII

#### THE HURRICANE, 1926

**D**ISBELIEF, ridicule and unpopularity, as we have seen, were the undeserved and unpalatable result of the Commodore's many incidental warnings against possible hurricanes and their disastrous effect on certain features of Miami and Bay development. In the spring of 1926, when he testified against the wisdom of island-building on the coral banks east of the Bay, many of those interested undoubtedly thought him a mere crank, standing in the way of public improvements for reasons of his own. There had been no gale for twenty years; why conjure one up now?

Late in July, however, a hurricane passed inland a little way north of Miami, and though the city was spared the storm center it was a revelation to the residents, who thought it a marvelous and portentous storm — undoubtedly the worst possible effort of the elements. The Commodore wrote: "We have had a beautiful time with a hurricane apparently made to order for me, blowing with just enough energy to put the fear of the Lord into the scoffers, and very possibly make them see the light. Fruit blown off is about all our damage, as the center passed north of Miami, giving us winds beginning at northeast and backing to southwest, almost all offshore. The coast from here up suffered severely, running into several millions. Patty and Wirth, with a party, sailed Sunday morning in *Melody* for a cruise to Angelfish. As trouble was evidently on the way, they were to go no further than Soldier Key that day, and tie up at night in the old hurricane harbor at Cape Florida. Monday morning it was breezing, and by nine it was a gale, but they were fast to the mangroves, as I ordered, and per-





fectly secure. This morning we saw them come out and continue their cruise."

This storm, clearly foreseen by the Commodore, and quietly provided for, so that it did not even interfere with the *Melody's* cruise, destroyed fruit and foliage and the less substantial buildings in Miami and northward with a free hand, and was met with howls of protest, dismay and consternation. Yet this damage was all caused by wind; because of the track of the storm, no unusual tide or sea was driven against the city, and that most destructive agency was still unrevealed. It was to come!

On September 16 the Commodore wrote: "We are having the outer edge of a mild West Indian cyclone, offshore, with rain and squalls. There's another of these things off St. Thomas, headed at present this way. We are making up for ten years' lost time, with six weeks of the season yet for them to play about in." With this letter there was delivered to me the Philadelphia paper with huge headlines: "MIAMI DESTROYED BY HURRICANE!" The St. Thomas storm had continued "headed this way," and struck in on Miami about a day after the letter was mailed.

We all remember what followed — the days of ignorance and half-news, with wires down, railroads impassable, roads blocked by fallen forests, and martial law shutting out all visitors. Rumored damage ran to thousands of lives and *all* property. On the twenty-second I had a wire: "We are safe; waterfront completely destroyed." On the twenty-eighth Patty wrote me a vivid letter, from which I quote:

"I loved every inch of this place, and you can't imagine how heartsick I am; it is a hopeless mess if ever there was one. Today they are setting up the most promising of the trees, except coconuts. Perhaps half a dozen of those are left standing, with the royals. We have still the large oaks, barren of every leaf and twig, but all smaller trees are uprooted or broken. This house stood like a rock, but the attic was the only dry spot; three windows and a door



upstairs blew in. Holes were bored in the ground-floor to let the water out, but it blew so hard that the rain came up through the flooring.

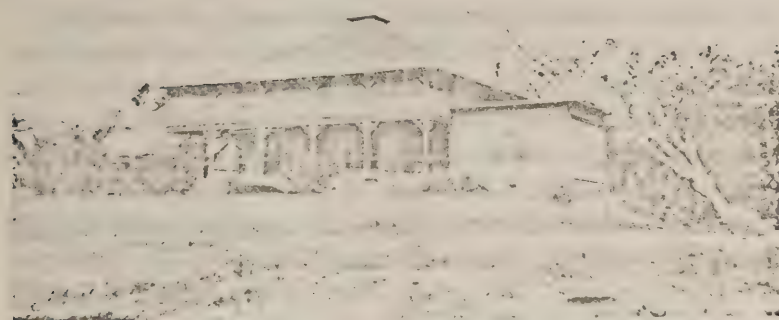
"The boathouse is entirely gone, and that hurts the most, though we are slowly finding part of its contents. The safe is there, but the key lost, and we can't open it to dry the papers. A lot of rescued letters and plans are drying on the lawn, and we have found four or five models. Daddy's desk stayed shut, and was picked up on top of the debris, half a mile away, full of papers. The Hine cottage is on Gardner's lawn; the Herreshoff cottage is a complete wreck, and we are digging up china and some of Capt. Nat's tools; Gardner's bay-cottage is gone, but the house uninjured; Poole boathouse gone, so the waterfront is desolate.

"You may imagine the lawns, with trees and branches piled eight feet high, besides barges, dredges, and yachts of all sizes. Two large motor-boats are in front of us, and down where our bamboos were is the Deerings' *Barbee*. *Arlega* is on the old Lake Placid School lawn, and *Sunset* high on the Helm fill. *Melody* was the only boat on the bay to ride it out at her moorings, but something had lifted her forehatch, and she sank the following night from rain. About six hundred boats were on the Bay, and *every one* was sunk or driven ashore!

"There is so much debris we have hardly made an impression; *everything* is on the bottom, even if one end does stick up. We were fortunate to have good cisterns — slightly salted, but nothing to hurt. We have no lights, so at night we go to bed."

One sentence in this stood out with especial meaning to those who had enjoyed the Coconut Grove waterfront — "the boathouse is gone!" First building on the bay-shore, for forty years the Commodore's office, drawing room and workshop, storehouse of most of the records and mementoes of his life, including the plans of over fifty boats and the models of many, a cherished selection of





THE BARNACLE, BEFORE AND AFTER





correspondence with friends in all quarters of the globe, and many especially treasured souvenirs, such as the famous old telescope of the *Annie H. Smith*, through which for so many years the Commodore had kept in close touch with the daily news of the Bay.

Here the yacht club had its first meetings, here Mrs. Thomas Munroe and Miss McFarlane kept house, here the Scotch ale lay hidden while the Bay discussed its mysterious disappearance, here the children had their first and favorite playgrounds, here in the rustling shade of the swaying coconuts the bland sea-breeze had tempered the sun to make the most perfect meeting-place for friendly talk, to which everybody in the neighborhood naturally gravitated, here fifty plans grew into boats, and made many times fifty friends. In short, here was the center and starting point of all the Commodore's closest interests in the last forty years — and *nothing* was left! Even the trees were gone, except a few whose roots had struck deep into the rocky crest of the beach. Fire could not have made a cleaner sweep, and I doubt if any single item in the widespread ruin of the hurricane could have caused greater personal dismay or sense of loss.

This was the greater shock in all our minds because the boathouse had withstood several severe hurricanes, and had never been flooded above its ground floor, while in this gale the water went to the old "well," not far from the Barnacle — about six and a half feet higher than any previous record — and it was the surf carried on this flood which battered the boathouse down and ground it into fragments. What caused this extraordinary difference in height of water?

There was one obvious answer. The second phase of the gale in this case drove the water inshore and northward; under normal conditions the tidal wave would have swept on up the Bay, over the shoals opposite Miami, and backing up in the head of the Bay, poured over the low sand beach into the sea, at "Baker's Haul-



over," where a new inlet has now been opened. But this was impossible; the causeway from the city to the beach formed a dam across the Bay, with only a drawbridge opening. Against it the flood piled up, and the whole Bay, from Cape Florida north to the causeway, became a pocket into which the hurricane drove the destructive waters to an unprecedented height. Never was more dramatic fulfillment of warning; less than a year before the Commodore had written: "If such a gale [that of '76] should be repeated, the destruction along our waterfronts would be unbelievable." Nor could there have been a better demonstration of the dangers involved in obstructing the age-long natural outlet for such flood waters. As the Commodore had often remarked, the whole topography of Florida grew into its present form through ages of slow molding by the great natural forces, of which the West Indian hurricanes were always an important, if intermittent, element, and common sense should certainly dictate the greatest care in making any marked changes, particularly in natural water-channels.

The boathouse is now replaced with a similar but stronger building, and such of its scattered contents as were dug out of the wreckage are reassembled — a pitiful remnant. But nothing can efface the shock we all felt in the sweeping away of this center of our Coconut Grove life and memories. Biscayne Bay without the old boat-house is almost "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out!

However smashing the blow of the hurricane, Miami certainly must be credited with all energy and wisdom in recovering from it. Immediate and thorough measures for safe water, milk and food supplies, emergency shelter and quick rebuilding plans followed each other promptly and ably, and before the world had realized the extent of the destruction, restoration was well under way. The well-nigh overwhelming mass of wreckage, of both trees and buildings, was cleared away like magic, and within six months Miami showed but little outward evidence of





the cataclysm. All credit to her, and all good fortune in the full years ahead! She will not forget September, 1926, nor will she fail to profit by its lessons.

On October 20 another hurricane passed near enough to make Miami "batten down her hatches" in some alarm; she was no longer scoffing at warnings, or disregarding the weather-prophets! The Commodore wrote: "Another hard breeze last night, but no further damage. This makes the third, and out, we hope."

Now the huge interminable trash-fires are burned out, the replanted trees have taken hold and thrown out leaves, new fronds have unfolded on the denuded palms and are rustling in the breeze, the forests are greening over with a dense growth of new twigs, injured buildings are repaired, and those destroyed are replaced by better ones. And along with the restoration, new enterprises are on foot — the whole complex stride of Florida development is quietly resuming its normal forward speed. In another year the shock and dismay of the boom and the hurricane will be lost in the limbo of things past and done and entered into history.

But they will not be forgotten! There is no longer the basis for another wild orgy of speculation — people know too much, thank goodness; that fever has run its course, and cannot be repeated. And similarly, though the gale is not talked of, and Miami faces forward confidently to a great future, which is all the more secure because now she knows how to build against gales, the big wind is not forgotten!

I slept with the Commodore on *Sunset* one night last spring in Caesar's Creek — a blowy, cloudy night, with a gusty easterly sweeping in from the Straits to whine in the rigging. I had not been afloat for some time, and the song of the cordage was music to me, but when I remarked this, the Commodore did not at once respond. After a thoughtful moment he said quietly, "Well, we don't enjoy the sound of the wind as much as we used to!"



## XIV

### FINALLY

SO in this new southeastern Florida land — so new that it is just beginning to realize its own possibilities, both for good and evil, and the far-reaching solidity of its value to the world has not yet had a chance to show itself clear of the mists of its beginnings and the smoke of its two great initial catastrophes — the boom and the gale — in this brand-new land we find the anomaly of a home that has grown about one man and his family for close to half a century. Loving the Bay and throwing in his lot with it when it was a barren and isolated wilderness, because of its incomparable climate and the unique beauty of its blue waters, he has seen a growth and change in it during his residence scarcely to be equaled in the history of our quick-moving country.

In use as a storehouse on the Commodore's grounds today is the "house of the *Three Sisters*" built by the Frows fifty years ago from wreck-lumber in the wilderness of the bayshore. In it was housed the first party of winter tourists to the Bay, in 1887. The next year came the boat-house, the first building ever erected on the immediate shore of the Bay; then came Browne's boathouse, and the Factory, and the first influx of settlers beyond the limits of the old pioneer circle.

And then the railroad. And then, one may say, the deluge! For the tiny trickle of winter visitors, slowly growing to a rivulet, suddenly leaped into a flood, and behold an amazing, threatening inundation! The struggling village of Miami was nursed into cityhood, and then took things into its own hands, waxed exceeding fat and prosperous, seized on and absorbed its neighbors for



many miles, and emerged as one of the liveliest and by no means the smallest of the new cities of America.

Unexpected value appeared in the lands about the Bay for fruit and vegetables, and then the remote and mysterious Everglades were partly drained, and became a "business section." The railroad flung out its magic Key West extension, to the combined marvel and disgust of the old cruising fraternity — and to its own amazement uncovered a tremendous and very profitable Cuban business. The Great War came and went, and finally the boom, and the hurricane.

And through these epochs and revolutions the Barnacle remained the center of a steadfast, wholesome, unhurried, home life. Even as the Commodore carefully preserved the old tangled forest of the hammock, and the simple beauty of the natural beach along the shore, so in his home he holds fast to the spirit of the old days, and to the great and lasting values of life — friendship, simplicity, good will, a keen but kindly judgment of men and things, and a hearty enjoyment of life. Whatever revolutions have been wrought in Miami, in the Everglades, on the keys, at the beach — however lost the old days may be in Florida at large, here at the Barnacle there is no revolution, but only a normal enjoyment of the new privileges brought by the development of the country. There are new rooms added to the house, new buildings on the grounds, new cars in a new garage — they do not replace, but merely add to, the home as it was. Anyone revisiting Miami in these last years is apt to be rather lost and overwhelmed in the flood of growth and destruction, but he enters the grounds of the Barnacle with a joyous sense of returning to the old days — a delightful island of quiet and wholesome life and friendship in the midst of the rather dizzy rush of impersonal "improvement."

And in the Barnacle, best of the old and best of the new, stands the Commodore, his eye as bright and his heart as warm as ever they were in the days of *Kingfish* and





*Egret.* There, to him, come the friends of many years, to keep warm the old associations and enrich the new. In the new boathouse, beneath the rustling shade of a few old coconuts, new problems are thrashed out, with some of the old boats looking on from their moorings and nodding quietly, just as they used to do. And there we may leave the Commodore's Story, daily unfolding in fact, though ended here in print.



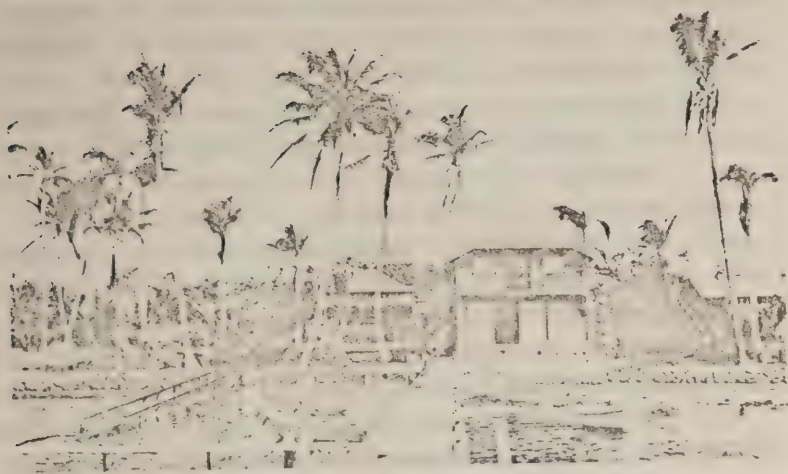
## APPENDIX I







THE OLD BOATHOUSE IN ITS GROVE



THE NEW BOATHOUSE, 1927



## THE MUNROE FAMILY

By R. M. M.

**I**N THE year 1015 Donald, founder of the Munroes, went to Scotland with a company of retainers from the banks of the river Ro in northern Ireland, in search of adventure and fortune, and found both. He joined Malcolm II and fought so well against the Danes that he was rewarded with the barony of Foulis in Rosshire, took the name Bon Ro or Mon Ro from his native river, and became the progenitor of a great clan, brave and patriotic — fighters all. One Baron Foulis served with Bruce and fell at Bannockburn, amid heaps of kinsmen; another died at Halydon Hill, and another at Edinburgh. Robert, eighteenth baron, helped Mary, Queen of Scots, and Robert, the twenty-first, served Gustavus Adolphus. In the time of the two Charleses there were fifty-seven Munroes in royalist armies with the rank of captain or higher, five being generals. One commanded against Cromwell, was surprised by Monk and executed at the Tower. His nephew commanded the Scots at Worcester and afterward accompanied Charles II to Holland.

Among Cromwell's prisoners at Worcester were many Munroes, and four were exiled to Boston in 1662. One of these, William, was my fourth-great-grandfather. His property was confiscated, and he was forced to labor to pay the costs of his own expatriation; nevertheless, within a few years he was a trusted man in Lexington, and as highly taxed as anyone. In 1695 he built the Munroe Tavern, famed in the Revolution, and still standing. He had thirteen children, all settled in the neighborhood.

His grandson Jedediah, with a kinsman Robert, was killed at Lexington on the fateful April 19, 1775, and many other Munroes fell in the Revolution. Jedediah's



oldest son, Daniel, married a daughter of Jonathan Parker, one of the "Boston Tea-party," and was thought to have attended that festivity himself. He was early invalided from the army, established a good provision business, lost it through assuming a debt of his father-in-law's, rebuilt it, lost it again through three years' illness, and finally, at 64, reestablished himself and was well known until his retirement at 80. He was a devout Christian, a kind neighbor, and a reliable, upright man.

His third son, William, was my grandfather. Born in 1778, he had small strength and little schooling. At thirteen he struck out for himself, and at seventeen apprenticed himself to Deacon Nehemiah Munroe, a cabinet-maker. Here he advanced rapidly, and eventually was head of the shop, though his ingenuity was cramped by the Deacon's extreme conservatism. One day he tried a new method of hanging a table-leaf, and a great row ensued; finally he was permitted to finish it, under protest, and then the method proved so superior that it was adopted as the rule of the shop. In 1800 he joined his brothers Daniel and Nathaniel, clockmakers in Concord, where he made clock-cases and show-cases for them, and some furniture on his own account.

In 1805 he married Martha, or "Patty," Stone, daughter of Captain John Stone of the East India trade, later a well-known engineer, who built the first bridge from Boston to Charlestown. On one of his voyages he brought his daughter a Chinese lacquered table which is now in my library, while her name came down to my daughter "Patty." This name goes back to the Greenoughs of Jamaica Plain, the family of Horatio Greenough, the sculptor.

In 1810 Grandfather William made a voyage to Norfolk to sell clocks taken in payment for cases. He invested the proceeds in corn and flour, returning in midwinter and barely escaping shipwreck. The flour was taken by Abel Prescott, of Concord, and paid for by title to the





shop "on the Milldam," which Grandfather occupied for many years. The whole transaction is interesting as an example of the extent to which barter, not cash, financed the trade of that time.

In the depression preceding the War of 1812 he made more furniture than he could sell. The only demand was for articles made abroad and cut off by the laws of non-intercourse. Lead pencils were in this class, very scarce and dear. Grandfather knew nothing of their manufacture, but determined to try his hand. He bought black-lead (later called graphite) pulverized it with a hammer, separated the powder with water in a tumbler, and made his first mixture in an iron spoon. The results were poor, but he continued to experiment, and in June, 1812, produced "2 8/12 dozen" pencils, the first made in America, and sold them to Benjamin Andrews of Boston for a shilling apiece. A fortnight later he brought in three gross, contracted for all he could make, and went into the business in earnest.

Quantity production involved new troubles, but perseverance conquered them, and the vital steps remained secret to himself and his wife, performed by their own hands. This phase of the business prospered until the war cut off the supply of black-lead. After the war it was resumed, and in a short time Grandfather had made a capital quite respectable for that period. In 1814 he produced 1,212 gross, for which he received \$5,946.

He now had to compete with the imported article, and his crude product was at first outclassed. Nevertheless he kept on, and in 1819 decided that he could concentrate on them. He sold the cabinet shop, taking pencil-woods as pay, and shortly found himself established as not only the first, but the best, of American pencil-makers. Improvements continued until 1830, when the trade sought him, rather than he the trade. He made as high as four thousand gross a year, of such quality that they readily outsold the imported ones and were eventually counter-



feited by the foreign makers. He first used the familiar marks, H, HH and HHH, to indicate degrees of hardness, afterward used by the Fabers, and supposed to have originated with them. His wife remained his only confidante, and was a most efficient helpmate; many a gross of pencils was stamped, wrapped, labeled and packed by her after a long day's work in the care of her large family.

At home my grandfather was gentle but firm. He was very temperate, and after the children grew never took wine or spirits except as medicine, never employed men who required the customary toddy, and was one of the first to oppose wine in the Social Circle. Yet when the Temperance Society was formed he would not join, saying that "temperance did not need a pledge." He also led the choir, in which he used a boxwood flute now among my relics, and he was a devout Christian, but so unostentatious that when elected deacon he refused the office. He had scrupulous honesty and great perseverance, and thought all success due to industry rather than ability. William and Martha Munroe lived to a good old age amid the respect and affection of their neighbors.

Their Concord home was a place of neighborly intimacy for the famous literary and philosophic group there, centering in the Social Circle. Thoreau worked in the pencil-factory for a time, living in the family, and Emerson, Hoar, the Alcotts and others were family friends. I have the original draft of the whimsical stanza which Louisa May Alcott wrote on the Concord School of Philosophy, with especial reference to Brook Farm:

Deluded world! Your Mecca is  
A sandbank glorified;  
The river that you seek and sing  
Has skeeters, but no tide.  
The gods raise garden-sarse and milk  
And in these classic shades  
Dwell nineteen chronic invalids  
And forty-two old maids.





My father, Thomas, was born in Concord in 1812. There was a large family, and all had to strike out early. Father went to Boston at fourteen, soon entered the dry-goods house of Amos Lawrence (for whom Lawrence, Massachusetts, is named) and rapidly learned the business. At twenty-three he was foreign buyer for Marcus Spring & Co., of New York, one of the largest houses in the city, his headquarters being in London.

He was a keen breezy "American" in business, as this progress suggests, and a frolicsome boy outside the office, full of pranks and larks not always in strict accord with his Puritan tradition, though always harmless and often amusing. One such, which got back to his dear old mother's ears in sleepy Concord, was of a voyage on the *Caledonia*, one of the first transatlantic steamers, with his elder brother William. Some weeks out of Liverpool she ran into a severe gale and nearly foundered, lying helpless for several days. While all hands had given up hope and were preparing for death, these two young scapegraces quietly played cards! Eventually the gale abated and the ship turned back, finally limping into port a month after her departure.

One of his diversions was a post-chaise race from London to Edinburgh, for a large wager, which he won quite easily by means of the relay system (pony express) of our western frontier—all new to the English. Among his associates was Charles Dickens, with whom he was very fond of playing billiards.

The slow packet-ship mail and the lack of telegraphic communication gave his youthful ingenuity and audacity many chances. Getting early news of the great fire of 1835 in New York, he at once "cornered the market" in certain lines of dry-goods and notions, exhausting the credit of both himself and the firm. He loaded three ships, sailing on the third, and on landing was met by Mr. Spring with lamentations and reproaches for adding this indebtedness to their apparently hopeless ruin.



This naturally angered him, and he started up the wharf with the curt remark that he would find men glad to take the goods off their hands in fifteen minutes. This gave Spring new ideas very quickly, and he followed Father on the run, with apologies. In the end the firm was completely rehabilitated by this purchase. Spring and others in New York were simply overwhelmed by the catastrophe, while Father, at a distance, saw the golden chance, and as he said, "pitched in."

He was married in London in 1839 to Ellen, daughter of Ralph Middleton, Esq., prominent mechanical engineer, shipowner and manufacturer, choosing July 4 for the wedding, as a good American citizen. They lived in London for some years, in evident comfort, their silverware bearing crest and motto; a few pieces of this came down to us, but most of it went to his creditors after a business failure in 1845.

My grandfather, Ralph Middleton, for whom I was named, was always interested in the sea, and as a boy was shipped in a Newcastle collier by his father as a cure for this fondness. This diverted him from becoming a sailor, but the love of the sea remained. Returning to his father's business, he finally became a manufacturer of chain-cables, and was especially known as the inventor of a machine for inserting the bracing-bar, or stud, in the middle of the links, which had previously been done by hand. In recognition of this service to maritime interests the British Board of Trade, or some such body, gave him a fine gold watch, and a chain made to represent a ship's cable, with links reinforced as by his machine, which is in my possession.

During the Crimean War one of his vessels got into serious difficulties near Sevastopol; he hurried to the scene, straightened matters out and took command. He thoroughly enjoyed this, stayed four years, and brought the ship home himself. His taste for the sea being still unsated, he then refitted the ship as a yacht, took on



board all the family except my mother, who was at school, and went around the world. They stopped some time at Sydney, where a son was born and named George Sydney Middleton. This ship, the *Maria*, was one of the earliest square-rigged vessels used as a yacht.

After this voyage he settled down to business. Among other things he superintended the construction of the steamship *Iberia*, one of the first iron-built ships of the Peninsular and Oriental Line. He was much interested in the *Great Western*, and tried to get command of her, but failed because he was not a Naval graduate, as was then required by the Cunard Co.; it was well he did, as she was lost on one of her first voyages. He was a great believer in the screw propeller, spent much time and money in perfecting it, and was on the eve of having it introduced into the British Navy when he died, suddenly, in 1841, at the age of 56. Grandfather Middleton was certainly a man of unusual ability.

His father, Peter Middleton, was Lord Mayor of York; he had twelve children, and the family resembled that of King George III to such an extent that they were known as the royal family of York. I have several pieces of Middleton family plate dating back over 225 years, which belonged to Peter's grandfather, also Peter Middleton.

Grandmother was Elinor Hastings Duel, of a Guernsey family. Her father, Lieutenant Duel, R.N., bequeathed to my mother the Anchor Wharf property at Limehouse on the Thames which now belongs to my sister and me. My great-uncle Robert Middleton built a fine residence at Limehouse, then a fashionable quarter. One of my mother's first cousins was Henry Thomas Buckle, the historian.

The Middletons appear to have been of Norman origin, and more or less prominent from the time of King John, though possibly not of the best reputation! Ralph was a favorite name, and Scott, in "Ivanhoe," mentions the hiring of two men-at-arms from the "Ralph Middleton Gang," to run down King Richard.





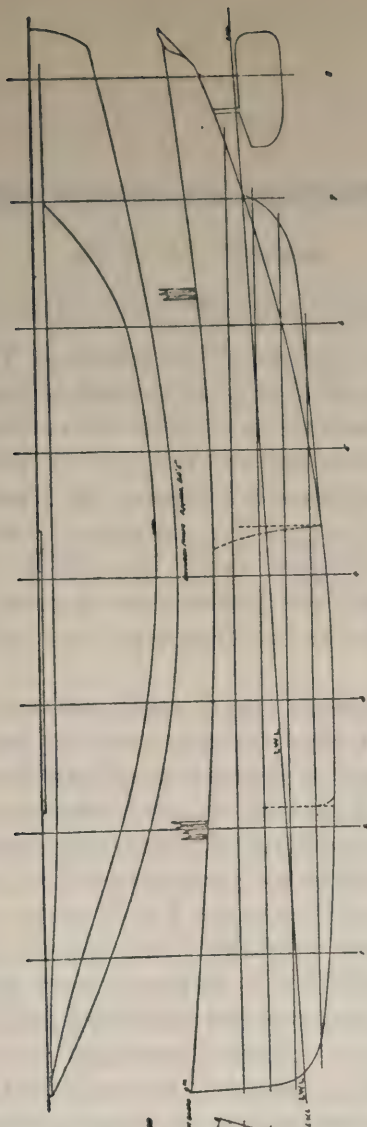


After several visits to America, Father returned here for good about 1846, and went into the dry-goods business for himself in New York. My mother's diaries describe their voyages and adventures. Though often seasick, she spoke with pleasure of the old packet-ship experiences, of their favorite skipper, Captain Britton, and of a record voyage of thirteen days.



## APPENDIX II





**PRESTO**

DESIGNED BY

R. C. HARRIS

SCALE: 1" = 1'-0"

OVERALL LENGTH 18'-0"

OVERALL BEAM 6'-0"

OVERALL DEPTH 2'-0"

OVERALL WEIGHT 1,200 LBS.

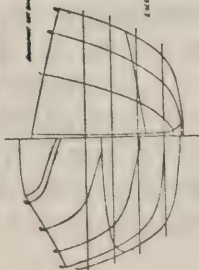
OVERALL POWER 10 HP.

OVERALL SPEED 15 MPH.

OVERALL RANGE 100 MILES.

OVERALL COST \$1,200.

OVERALL COMMENTS: A small, fast, and efficient boat for recreational use.



LINES OF PRESTO





## THE *PRESTO* TYPE OF CENTERBOARDER

By R. M. Munroe

(Republished in part from "Yachting," November, 1926)

**I**N RECENT numbers of "Yachting" some friends of mine appear in defense of light draft for seagoing sail craft, in answer to the articles of several keel advocates published earlier in the year. As none of the keel articles seem to be based on complete knowledge of the *Presto*-type in question, it may be well to give the objectors its fundamentals. I do not claim originality in these; I suspect they were known before my time, and merely forgotten in the race for speed and other odd fancies of the ages.

First and foremost, *Presto* is no "skimming dish." This derisive epithet has been applied indiscriminately to all light draft vessels without thought or reason. We admit she was the outcome of the sharpie type, but this also is little understood and often condemned, whereas it gives today greatest accomplishment for least cost, relatively, of all existing types. This I suspected forty-five years ago at Key West, in the first half-hour after launching a 30-foot sharpie from the deck of a Mallory liner. A few days later we had a decisive test in a hard norther up the Reef, when my chartered freight schooner gleefully offered me a tow-line and I refused it. After twenty-one miles dead to windward, we waited seventy-five minutes for the schooner to catch up, and I capitulated to the sharpie type with little reservation.

Six sharpies were eventually built for use on Biscayne Bay and the Straits by myself and friends. They followed conventional New Haven lines, but with about ten per cent additional depth to insure greater buoyancy at



extreme angles of heel. None of them were ever capsized to my knowledge. One of them, *Egret*, a double-ender, served me for several years without mishap as dispatch-boat between Biscayne Bay and Jupiter telegraph station, via the Gulf Stream, blow high or blow low, often making the trip comfortably when no other boats would attempt either the Stream or the surf in the shoal inlets.

The sharpie hull, introduced to Florida by me, as I believe, came into general use there for freighting. Several of them hailed from Lake Worth and ran regularly to Jacksonville in the days before the railroad. The *Bessie B*, for example, will be remembered by all early visitors to Palm Beach — a schooner-rigged sharpie of about fifty feet, belonging to the Brelsford Brothers. She ran for many years, usually overloaded, and rode out several hurricanes in the Gulf Stream, always reaching port with cargo intact. Her repeated triumphs, over what were unquestionably the extreme of severe conditions, were what finally convinced me that a very shoal flat-bottomed boat could be very able.

But the slap and pound of sharpies in a head sea or at anchor was an annoyance, and the V-bottom was well and favorably known. So in 1885, after a close study of the causes for so much extreme stability, and such perfect handling in the sharpies, and in the belief that the designers had overlooked some of the basic points, I was led to make a try for still greater stability. Throwing aside the old axioms that with light draft one must have more beam, I did the opposite, lessening the beam at deck, and still more at waterline, but adding a little deadrise, and increasing the depth of hull and bilges to give ample displacement and righting moment. Thus, with slightly rounded bilges, and clean entrance and clearance we arrived at *Presto*.

She was launched with spars in place, but no ballast. Her builder, "Uncle Cris" Brown,<sup>1</sup> then stepped on her

<sup>1</sup>Head of A. C. Brown & Sons, at Tottenville, Staten Island.



rail amidships, his 200-lb. weight heeled her almost to the plank-sheer, and he at once condemned her. Next day I ballasted her nearly to her designed waterline, rigged her and went to see a cup-race off Sandy Hook, where, in a fresh breeze, she handled perfectly and showed no sign of tenderness. She carried  $4\frac{1}{2}$  tons of iron inside, and was tried out with cockpit temporarily decked over, but she never heeled enough to take water over the cockpit rail in the six years that I sailed her from Cape Cod to the Gulf of Mexico, in all kinds of sea and weather.

She was 41' o.a., 35' 6" waterline, 10' 6" beam on deck, 9' 1" at waterline, 4' 3" depth amidships, 1" to 1' deadrise amidships, 30" greatest draft (amidships) with 8" at forefoot. Her keel was 12" wide through length of centerboard and  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " deep below garboard, rockered from forefoot to bottom of transom, 1' 6" above W. L., with no deadwood aft. She was steered with the ordinary sharpie drop-rudder, balanced, 4' 6" x 1' 9", rounded at ends, with 3' 6" iron tiller, and she handled well, though if the helmsman were careless she could be swung so quickly as to make standing on deck, fore or aft, rather precarious. Later on, wishing a better base for docking, we bolted on a skeg, running from nothing at after end of centerboard case to within a foot of the rudder, with its after end well rounded up. Centerboard was 11' x 4', 10' 9" from face of stem.

She was ketch-rigged, mainmast 36' high from deck, 8" diameter at deck, mizzen 29' 6" high,  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " diam., bowsprit outboard 9'. No standing shrouds, but backstay runners with purchases when needed. Topsail yard 20', sprit 19'. Sail area, jib, 200 sq. ft., mainsail 412, mizzen 266, topsail 274; total 1152 effective before the wind, 1050 by the wind.

She was one of the most wholesome and satisfactory boats I ever owned. From my experiences in sharpies and my preliminary figures, I had no expectation of







racing windward speed. I knew it could not be embodied in my ideal cruiser, so just dismissed the point. All the remaining good qualities, most essential from the standpoint of practical experience, *Presto* had. *One* alteration only suggested itself for her successors — a *little* more beam, to give, if possible, better footing, close hauled. This it did to a remarkable degree in *Micco*, *Wabun* and *Carib*, each of which had a wide reputation for speed.

Increase of beam I knew had to be treated gingerly, for the ratio between beam, ballast and sail area had to be kept, or the result would be a failure — and I am glad to say that never happened in my experience. Some critic will exclaim, "But, if your boats have the stability you claim, they must *roll out*" (a dreadful caper, from the racing man's point of view). They certainly do, I admit, to some extent, then wiggle the wind partly out of their sails, right with no apparent effort, and go on. If deck openings are closed nothing happens, and we are thankful to be able to spill the wind and water in that simple manner. They never cut up these shines, however, except under the most adverse circumstances. Personally, I've never seen one of my craft doing these stunts except when carrying sail out of all reason, with other craft snugged down to the last rag.



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